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Maxwell brothers are cleared

Tears and hugs greet verdict in £30m case

By JON ASHWORTH, CAROL MIDDLEY AND MICHAEL HORSNELL

THE two youngest sons of the media tycoon Robert Maxwell were cleared yesterday of a £122 million conspiracy to defraud company pensioners in a dramatic trial which could spell the end of the Serious Fraud Office.

After a record 12-day retirement by the jury, Kevin and Ian Maxwell celebrated their unanimous acquittal with tears and hugs, before shaking the hands of the seven women and five men who gave them their freedom.

A third defendant, Larry Trachtenberg, 42, an Ameri-

summing-up the judge said he thought no jury had had a better opportunity of assessing the honesty of the witness than in my case.

"Anyone who wishes to discover my attitude to the events leading to the collapse of my father's group has only to read a transcript of my evidence. I have nothing to add to it."

Ian said: "I have much in my heart that I will keep for myself and my family. I would like also to pay tribute to that family and to my lawyers who have been a constant source of strength and pride to me as has my brother. I trusted him then as I trust him now. I am very pleased that we are standing here together to be able to say this to you."

An emotional Laura Maxwell, Ian's wife and a former model, rushed across the courtroom to embrace both brothers.



Taste of freedom: Ian and Kevin Maxwell, with Ian's wife Laura, leave court after their 121-day trial. The Maxwells held a family party last night to celebrate the verdict

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can former lecturer on international relations at the London School of Economics who gave up his academic career to become an adviser to Robert Maxwell, was also cleared of all charges.

The country's most expensive case is believed to have cost £30 million, including the 131-day trial which began on May 31 last year and the SFO investigation.

Kevin, 36, embraced his 39-year-old brother when they appeared on the steps of the Old Bailey annex where their trial had been held.

Speaking publicly for the first time since their arrest in 1992, Kevin said: "I gave evidence in this trial over a period of 21 days and in his

summing-up the judge said he thought no jury had had a better opportunity of assessing the honesty of the witness than in my case.

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Kevin's wife Pandora, who is five months pregnant with her sixth child, said from the family home in Moulford, Oxon, after collecting the children from school: "We are all as you can imagine, very relieved indeed. The family have kept me going. I have never sunk into the depths of despair because that wouldn't have helped Kevin."

John Warnford-Davis, Pandora's father, made a mobile telephone call to her from the court and was warned by officials about using it.

Betty Maxwell, Robert Maxwell's widow, was not in court. She had provided financial assistance and gave evidence on behalf of her sons.

The two brothers, who were both on legal aid, gave thumbs-up signs to the wait-

ing media but neither would comment on whether the verdict vindicated their father. They spent two hours in their solicitors' chambers and then fought their way through waiting photographers to a waiting Land Rover. Ian Maxwell said: "I am going to take it one day at a time. The champagne stays on ice. Laura has been wonderful. She has stood by me everyday."

The jubilant family later gathered for a private celebration. After the courtroom gasps which greeted their acquittal, Alan Suckling QC, who led the prosecution, asked

Lord Justice Phillips for a seven-day adjournment to consider future prosecutions.

But amid growing expectation that the SFO would not proceed with eight outstanding charges against the Maxwells and four other men, Alan Jones QC, for Kevin Maxwell, said it would be "oppressive" to do so and cause stress and anxiety. He said: "No jury has ever had a better opportunity to judge a defendant's honesty than in this case." A decision will be taken within the next week.

George Staple, the beleaguered SFO chief, said: "The SFO started investigat-

Fraud office is in the dock again

By PATRICIA TEHAN AND ROBERT MILLER

THERE were calls last night for dramatic changes in the way the Serious Fraud Office operates.

Senior City figures and former SFO officers said that they have watched in disbelief as trial after costly trial has foundered. Some have dubbed the organisation the *Serious Farce Office*.

The SFO started investigat-

ing Maxwell's business affairs less than a month after Robert Maxwell disappeared on November 5 1991. The Maxwell trial is estimated to have cost £30 million and the reputation of the SFO was resting on a successful prosecution.

Yesterday's result follows similar high profile "failures", such as the loss of the Brent Walker and Blue Arrow cases and including the sentencing of Roger Levis to community

service after an investigation into the £58 million collapse of the Levitt Group.

This time, however, the SFO believed it had learnt its lesson. The number of charges was kept to a minimum, whittled down from 10 to just two in order to present a straightforward case to the jury.

Last night there were calls for the abolition of the current trial by jury and its replacement by a panel of legal

experts better able to understand the complexities of such detailed fraud trials. It is now expected that a government-sponsored report will be commissioned to consider getting rid of the jury system in such cases.

David Lee, a former SFO assistant director who now runs a forensic accounting company, said: "It may be that the jury believed that these were technical offences."

Continued on page 2, col 6

Commons defeat for daylight Bill

Plans to move British clocks an hour forward to be in line with Europe were defeated yesterday in the Commons. Time ran out for John Birt's plans when Scottish Office Ministers lined up with Scottish nationalists, northern Labour MPs and Tory Euro-sceptics to wreck the Bill.

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Ferry hijackers surrender to Turks

FROM ANTHONY LOYD AT ANADOLU FENERI

THE armed Chechen sympathisers holding 170 hostages aboard the Turkish ferry *Ayazma* surrendered peacefully to security forces last night, after contacting lawyers from the vessel.

The hijackers were taken off the ship by coastguards as darkness fell, after they had made a final attempt to avoid a Turkish naval blockade at the mouth of the Bosphorus.

The four-day ordeal ended without bloodshed, except for an injured security guard in contrast to the heavy-handed assault on the village of Pervomayskoye, in southern Russia. The hijackers threw

their weapons into the Black Sea as the nightmare ended for their captives.

"There was no bargaining," said Tansu Ciller, the Turkish Prime Minister. "We told them there was no way they could get away with this kind of thing."

Shortly before the crisis ended, an unidentified gunman told the ATV network: "We have reached our goal. We are ending this action."

The Turkish authorities could bring charges of abduction or terrorism against the hijackers, who may face up to 41 years in jail.

The incident was brought to

an end as a result of the intervention of Semsettin Yusuf, the self-styled Chechen foreign minister, who became directly involved in talks on behalf of the Turks. He is reported to have assured them that Turkey was an ally of Chechnya, and that any continuation of their action would endanger the relationship.

The eight hostage-takers, Turkish nationals of Abkhazian and Tartar origin led by Muhammad Tokcan, had earlier released eight hostages as a gesture of goodwill while the ferry was anchored below Anadolu Feneri, the lighthouse on the Asian side of the

mouth of the Bosphorus. Those freed included two women, a child and the security guard. He was wounded on Tuesday when the gunmen took over the ferry at Trabzon, 270 miles east of Istanbul.

It was unclear whether the Turkish authorities had promised the men leniency. Negotiators had earlier spoken of prison terms varying in length between eight months and ten years. However, any such clemency would infuriate the Russians, whose handling of the Chechen crisis sparked the hostage-taking.

Fight for hostages, page 12

Prisoners freed before deadline

A total of 225 Serb and Muslim prisoners were released at Sarajevo airport yesterday, hours before a Dayton peace accord deadline, the International Committee of the Red Cross said.

Pierre Gautier, a Red Cross official, said the prisoners from the two sides were freed simultaneously.

Bosnia deadline, page 16

South Africa win

South Africa went 5-1 up in the seven-match cricket series with a 14-run win in the sixth limited-overs match against England. South Africa's 129 was their lowest score in one-day internationals.

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Major says social chapter is immoral

By JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN MAJOR signalled yesterday that he will use the social chapter as one of his main political weapons in the run-up to the general election.

The Prime Minister, who delighted Euro-sceptics earlier this week by agreeing to a White Paper on Europe, sought to underline the differences with Labour by denouncing the chapter, which is backed by Tony Blair, as "immoral".

He used a speech in Birmingham to regain the initiative after renewed speculation of a new plot to remove

him. He used some of his strongest language yet to criticise interference by Brussels in workers' rights and gave a warning of the future impact of more regulations on employment and social issues.

But the Labour leader dismissed Mr Major's attack as "exaggerated, violent and ludicrous."

Mr Blair said that the social chapter had only proposed two legal changes, one on employees' rights and one on parental leave.

Immoral tax, page 10



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"MY GOD! A BUFFALO!"

Evidence at sons' trial confirms Maxwell's transformation from war hero to ogre

Dictator of Holborn continues to hold sway from beyond the grave

By JON ASHWORTH

THE FATHER

EVEN in death, Robert Maxwell could not be silenced. His ghost stalked the courtroom in Chancery Lane as witness after witness spoke of ceaseless tyranny at the Mirror Group's Holborn headquarters. Maxwell's presence could be sensed at every step of the trial, from documents bearing his signature, flashed up on the courtroom screen, to accounts of his last moments on Lady Chelmsford, his luxury motorcar.

Jurors were drawn into the world of a dictator and megalomaniac who bullied his children and forced directors and bankers to bow to his every demand. He was "an investment manager of one" who signed away millions with one hand, then casually dispensed authorising documents with the other.

Maxwell's lifestyle epitomised the excess of the 1980s. Office workers in Holborn grew used to the sound of his Squirrel helicopter landing on the roof of Maxwell House. Two Gulfstream executive jets were on hand for longer trips and there was a Rolls-Royce for more mundane journeys. Wealth did not always marry with good taste. Maxwell once ordered his chauffeur to stop outside a fish and chip shop and proceeded to eat the impromptu meal in the comfort of his leather-clad seat. He dressed in turban and slippers at a party thrown by the billionaire US publisher Malcolm Forbes and was famously photographed on his yacht in a T-shirt bearing the slogan "Are We Rich Yet?" His life was insured for £20 million.

Maxwell's early days had a touch of Ernest Hemingway. Born Ian Ludvik Hoch, to Jewish parents in Czechoslovakia in 1923, he fought for the

Allies after the Normandy landings, using the name Leslie du Maurier, taken from a brand of cigarettes. Hailed for his skills as a marksman, he was awarded the Military Cross for storming an enemy emplacement under fire. A senior officer suggested the name Robert Maxwell, and the transformation was complete.

It was in the liberated Paris that he met Betty Meynard, soon to become his wife. Maxwell told her of his dream of becoming a British MP and went on to realise his ambition with mixed success, taking his place on the backbenches under Harold Wilson — and embarrassing everyone with a rambling opening speech. Maxwell's wealth and rumbustiousness never sat comfortably with the subtle ways of the House.

Business brought success but no less controversy. He

attracted the lasting hatred of Harold Macmillan and others over the collapse of Simpkin Marshall, which acted as an intermediary between publishers and bookshops. "Captain" Maxwell, as he liked to be known, conceded that he had come down flat, but was on the up again. The Bouncing Czech was born. By the time of his death, the Maxwell empire embraced everything from Mirror Group Newspapers and The European, to Berlitz language courses.

Such was Maxwell's regime of fear — writs were routinely issued — that the transformation from war hero to ogre became apparent only after his death. The jurors at the trial of his sons were told how he would routinely humiliate senior managers and staff — family included — despite flashes of generosity. Kevin, giving evidence, spoke of his father's bullying streak and

verbal dressings down. Friends would tell how silence was demanded when Maxwell watched television at home.

The trial provided some answers to the most intriguing question of all — what happened to Robert Maxwell in the early hours of November 5, 1991? Did he run from his cabin, gasping for air, and plunge overboard after suffering a heart attack? Did he commit suicide, realising his empire was on the brink of collapse? Or was he assassinated by Mossad agents over his role in shadowy Israeli dealings?

Kevin Maxwell provided a more down-to-earth explanation: his father probably fell overboard while urinating. Maxwell was a light sleeper, who would wake often, and found it convenient to relieve himself over the side. The spot he favoured was guarded by a thin piece of wire and was "not the safest part of the vessel".

An autopsy found that Maxwell's left shoulder had been subject to "immense and extraordinary strain", suggesting he had grabbed at the rail as he fell but had been dragged down by his weight. The Israeli pathologist concluded that suicide was unlikely, adding: "It is more likely that he fell into the sea either as a result of accident or homicide." Another medical witness suggested the death was consistent with a syndrome in which people faint during or after urinating.

The collapse of the Maxwell empire prompted changes in pension legislation and sent a ripple of fear through British boardrooms. Never again, it was said, would one man be allowed to dominate a business empire through tyranny and fear. The trial may be over, but Maxwell's spectre lingers on.



Maxwell, known then as Leslie du Maurier, receiving the Military Cross from Montgomery



The publisher, dubbed "an investment manager of one", in his office at Maxwell House

Tycoon's grave attracts only the angry

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

AT THE Jewish Cemetery overlooking the valley where God will judge humanity, visitors are already pronouncing judgment on Robert Maxwell. Shattered glass lies around his tombstone, a frequent target for bottles thrown by those angry at having lost money in the collapse of the Maxwell empire.

"I have to clean the broken bottles," said Abed Ziad, the 70-year-old Arab gravedigger and cemetery caretaker. "I

catch people. I tell them, 'Please don't do it. I ask them why they do it.'"

While the vandals have made the pilgrimage, few friends or relatives have been to the grave near the top of the Mount of Olives, facing Jerusalem's old city, for some time. It is customary for Jews to place a small stone when visiting a grave. None has been placed recently on top of Maxwell's tombstone.

A woman, who identified herself as Maxwell's sister, was the last person seen by Mr Ziad practising this custom at the graveside. "It was about three

months ago. She placed some stones there and asked me for a candle which she also placed on top. She did not speak Hebrew. I think she was from London."

Mr Ziad knows the site well, not only because tourists sometimes ask for it. It is the location of perhaps the biggest grave he has had to dig in the cemetery. "Big man, very fat," he said of the shrouded corpse placed in the ground in November 1991 in what amounted to a full state funeral attended by Yitzhak Shamir, then the Israeli Prime Minister, and most of his ministers.

Tears and hugs as the Maxwells are cleared Fraud Office under fire

Continued from page 1
guered director of the SFO, said that the Maxwell verdicts will not damage the organisation. He said: "It was a prosecution that had to be brought. We must respect the jury's decision. I would not see it as a waste of money."

Mr Staples said a very large sum of money had gone missing and this had to be thoroughly investigated. "We had to bring to it very considerable resources to do that. I believe that in this case the system has worked as it was designed to work."

"We are supposed to be neither pleased nor disappointed at the outcome of these cases. We simply have to ensure that the evidence is put before the court and the defendants receive a fair trial. That has happened in this case. To

that extent the system has worked as it should do."

Immediate demands from MPs for a statement from the Attorney-General Sir Nicholas Lyall followed the verdicts.

Paul Boateng, Opposition spokesman on legal affairs, said: "This is a grave and potentially fatal setback for the SFO that calls into question the future of that institution. There must now be a serious question mark as to whether a fundamental overhaul should now take place in the process of bringing to justice those responsible for City fraud."

Alex Carlile QC, the Liberal Democrat, said Sir Nicholas should explain "how the disastrous decision to prosecute them, at enormous public expense, was taken".

Lord Denning, former Mas-

ter of the Rolls, said: "The verdict involves a criticism of the Serious Fraud Office in taking this case up. Although the prosecution may have been launched in good faith nevertheless the verdict of the jury shows the prosecution was mistaken. Our system of trial by jury has been vindicated even in a case taken up by the SFO."

Kevin Maxwell was alleged to have conspired to swindle Mirror Group and other pensioners out of shares worth more than £100 million to shore up imperilled companies owned by his father.

After Robert Maxwell died off the Canary Islands in November 1991, Kevin and Ian were alleged with others to have used another £22 million of pension fund assets in an effort to pay pressing debts

and save the "desperate" group from collapse.

Jurors accepted Kevin's claim that his father had shown him a fax stating that shares worth £100 million had been properly transferred from the pension funds to the private Maxwell companies.

The judge, in his summing up, said it was for the jury to decide whether Kevin was telling the truth. If they believed his claim, then he had to be found not guilty of fraud.

The brothers counted on the support of the banks but rumours that their father had committed suicide sent the shares into a tailspin, seriously undermining bank loans. The expectation that a mysterious Middle Eastern "white knight" would inject up to £400 million into the companies never materialised.

Jean Baddeley, Robert Maxwell's former aide who has employed both brothers since their arrests in 1991 as consultants at her Mayfair-based business Westbourne Communications, was in the public gallery.

She said: "I was always convinced of their innocence, justice has been done. Now we can get back to the land of the living."

Civil cases against the Maxwell brothers to try to claim back millions of pounds may be affected by the jury's not guilty verdicts, it was claimed.

Solicitor John Fordham, whose firm represents 30,000 Mirror pensioners, has so far successfully clawed back £276 million from the missing £450 million fortune plundered from Robert Maxwell's companies.

Continued from page 1
It again calls into question whether there should be an expert panel in major fraud trials rather than a jury."

John Wood, founder director of the SFO, recently said: "We need to look again at the jury — not necessarily to do away with it, but to see whether we should go back to the special jury, abolished many years ago."

SFO officers were said to be "shocked and gutted" by the verdict, having hoped for at least one conviction.

Last year the Davies report to Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Attorney-General, recommended that the SFO be kept as an independent organisation and be expanded to take over some of the work of the Crown Prosecution Service.

The SFO was created after

the Roskill committee report in 1986 called for a "single, unified organisation responsible for all the functions of detection, investigation and prosecution of serious fraud." At a time of mounting City scandals, the proposal won strong support. The Criminal Justice Act of the following year paved the way for its formation in 1988.

After its failures the agency has been to great lengths to defend its record. Excluding the Maxwell defendants, it claims a conviction rate in 143 cases brought by the SFO since 1988 to nearly 200 out of 321 defendants prosecuted.

The objective of the SFO was to tackle serious cases of fraud more effectively by bringing lawyers, accountants and police together in a special investigative team. It deals

with cases involving more than £1 million and its work has included investigations into the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, Guinness, the Barlow Clowes and Blue Arrow affairs and, more recently, the Barings Bank collapse.

The SFO has a budget of around £18 million a year, and around 140 permanent staff, mainly lawyers and accountants. Police officers are attached to the agency from their own forces for each investigation.

Under Section 2 of the Criminal Justice Act, SFO members can require individuals to answer questions or produce documents, on pain of prosecution. The SFO describes the powers as "invaluable for getting to the heart of complex frauds".

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Crown's failure to secure a conviction is likely to provoke demands for reform

Not-guilty verdicts put system back in the dock

REPORTS BY FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

TRIAL BY JURY

THE dramatic acquittal of the Maxwells yesterday will fuel the debate among prosecution authorities over whether juries are capable of trying complex fraud trials.

It will also, at the very least, strengthen the case — backed by the Lord Chancellor but opposed by the Lord Chief Justice — for research into how juries carry out their task.

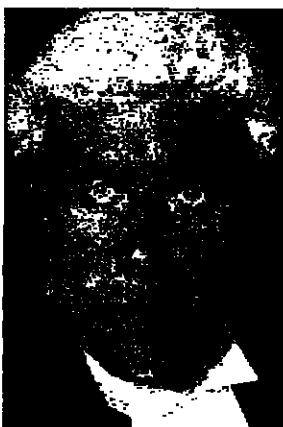
If any jury was expected to quash the growing belief that ordinary people should not try such trials, it was the Maxwell jury. The five men and seven women were chosen after an American-style procedure, unprecedented in this country, designed to pick the model jury for a lengthy fraud trial.

Lord Justice Phillips won admiration from prosecution and defence alike for his trial management. It was ironic, therefore, that despite such efforts the Crown failed to secure any convictions.

But yesterday the Bar gave warning against condemning the jury system on the back of the acquittals. Christopher Sallon, QC, chairman of the Bar's public affairs committee, said: "If people argue that juries should be scrapped in fraud trials, they are really saying the Maxwells should have been convicted. I am very anxious that this should not be

a prelude to judge the ability of juries in fraud trials. I think it vindicates the system. We have serious criminal charges, with penal consequences, and tried by members of the public with the evidence properly prepared by the Serious Fraud Office and properly presented. The judge, too, was of the highest calibre."

Lord Justice Phillips, 57, brought in a series of innovations to make the trial as manageable and comprehensible to jurors as possible. Richard Lissack, QC, one of the leading prosecuting counsel, said: "He has been the



Lord Justice Phillips: brought in new ideas

single greatest influence on the trial. His conduct has been faultless. What has been so remarkable has been his temperament — his patience and attention to detail, and his fairness to everyone: counsel, defendants, witnesses, the jury, the press."

Known as a "Rolls-Royce" judge, Lord Justice Phillips won plaudits for his deft handling of the Barlow Clowes trial in 1991. From well before the start of the Maxwell trial, he adopted the new "hands-on" approach advocated by the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Taylor of Gossforth, and by Lord Woolf, who is chairing an inquiry into civil justice.

In the pre-trial hearings he was "pro-active, not just a passenger", according to one lawyer, and was involved at every stage. He had the indictment reduced from ten charges to two — a manageable task for one trial.

The system of jury selection over two weeks involved sifting about 700 potential jurors down to 70 through the use of lengthy questionnaires and then orally questioning those on the shortlist.

The aim was to find people who would be able and willing to stay the course of a trial lasting several months. Ac-

count was taken of people who had holidays booked or problems with childcare. Potential jurors were asked their jobs, what papers they read, and what they had read about the Maxwells.

Once before, in the Kray brothers trial, juries were asked whether they had been influenced by press publicity, but this time extensive questionnaires were used. Potential jurors were asked, American-style, if they had heard of the accusations against the Maxwells and if they would be able to be dispassionate about them.

Two batches of 350 were given questionnaires. Their answers excluded 550 for a variety of reasons including ill health, personal and holiday booked. The replies of the other 150 were screened by judge and lawyers for both Crown and defence and put into one of three groups, A, B and C.

One quarter fell into C and were rejected on grounds of literacy and "in the interests of justice". Nearly three quarters went into B because answers were incomplete or ambiguous or inconsistent. They were questioned further personally by the judge, before lawyers. Just a handful went into A, with no apparent grounds for being excluded.

After the further question-



Ian Maxwell, centre, embraces his wife Laura and brother Kevin inside the court after their acquittal

ing, further jurors were excluded: one seemed too keen, another seemed not to be truthful in not knowing anything about the Maxwell allegations. From the final shortlist, 12 were then drawn at random.

The judge also introduced a new court day of 9.30am to 1.30pm, with the afternoons reserved for legal argument. It meant jurors did not have to concentrate all day and saved them having to keep coming in and out of court while counsel

discussed legal points in their absence. The judge also provided the jury with a summary of his 3½-day summing-up, although lawyers were critical of the refusal to allow juries to have daily transcripts of proceedings.

A keen advocate of new technology, the judge promoted the use of the computer system in court to the full. Prosecuting counsel provided a "road map" of all documents that they would call, down to

the passage to be examined. These were then instantly produced on all the monitors around the courtroom.

The courtroom itself was far cry from the traditional Crown Court. Light and airy, it was packed with desks and computers and resembled an open-plan office. There was no dock, and the defendants sat, American-style, with their lawyers.

Whatever the future over

the trial outcome, the judge has provided a blueprint for management of such trials in future. His abilities have already been acknowledged: mid-way through the trial, he was promoted to the Court of Appeal.

Not only does Lord Justice Phillips have a high reputation intellectually, he is well-liked. In a recent survey by *Legal Business* he was one of the three most popular judges with lawyers.

'He is in court because he is his father's son'

FROM the moment the jurors withdrew to consider their verdicts last week, the prosecution privately acknowledged the distinct possibility that the Maxwells would be cleared.

The crown team, led by Alan Suckling, QC, and Richard Lissack, QC, had deployed their case faultlessly; and they believed it to be a strong one. The trial had run smoothly and been managed with flair by Lord Justice Phillips.

But the defence, and Alan Jones, QC, for Kevin Maxwell in particular, had argued skilfully that Robert Maxwell's sons had not acted dishonestly, and nor, for that matter, had the late Maxwell.

For Robert Maxwell was effectively on trial with the other defendants: in a rare move, the late newspaper proprietor was named on the indictment as a co-defendant in the conspiracy to defraud. The logical conclusion, Mr Jones told the court, was that conviction of Kevin would involve conviction of his father; acquittal would imply his father was not guilty.

Mr Jones' approach was two-pronged: first, he did not seek to impute dishonesty to Robert Maxwell and distance his sons. On the contrary he defended him, insisting Robert Maxwell was innocent of any fraud in his handling of pension fund assets.

He said Robert Maxwell had believed he acted lawfully when he helped remove £100 million in assets from Maxwell pension funds to pay

THE DEFENCE

debts elsewhere. To that end, he argued his death was never suicide, but an accident. "We do not accept that Robert Maxwell killed himself," he said.

In a second line of argument, he maintained that even if Robert Maxwell was guilty of the dishonesty alleged — which Mr Jones accepted was "one real possibility" — then Kevin was not.

Similarly, Edmund Lawson, QC, for Ian Maxwell, told the jury: "Ian Maxwell finds himself in the metaphorical dock (there was no actual dock in the courtroom) not because of what he did, but because of who he is: Maxwell and his father's son."

The sons, the court heard, were victims of their father, a "dominant and controlling



Alan Jones QC: argued skilfully for the defence

force" whom they had believed and admired. They had simply followed his instructions, believing what he told them. Kevin, Mr Jones said, had accepted the Scotex shares had been properly transferred to RMG "because his father had told him so."

One problem for the defence remained: Kevin Maxwell's lies, on his own admission, to bankers. Again, though, he said that he had done so "only with great reluctance on his father's angry instructions". He told the jury of the shame he felt at having agreed with the orders his father gave during a stormy session at which the publisher thumped the desk with his fist.

The question of truthfulness was at the heart of the trial. Lord Justice Phillips emphasised that the key factor was whether the jury believed Kevin Maxwell had lied in the witness box.

"Allegations of lying have featured very large in this trial," he said. The jury, he said, must compare truthfulness of any witness by comparing his evidence with other evidence available and contemporary documents.

Only the jury could decide whether Kevin Maxwell was telling the truth when he claimed his father told him that ownership of shares at the centre of the alleged pension funds fraud had been transferred to the private Maxwell companies. Yesterday they unequivocally did so.

Taxpayer must foot £30m bill after grant of legal aid

LEGAL COSTS

THE Maxwell trial is likely to enter the record books as the most expensive criminal prosecution for which the taxpayer has had to foot the bill. The final cost is predicted to reach £30 million, taking into account more than four years' investigation by the Serious Fraud Office, pre-trial preparation by four separate teams of barristers, solicitors and accountants (one team per defendant, but reduced to three at the trial after one defendant fell ill) and the eight-month trial itself.

Although there have been other big fraud cases, such as the Guinness and Blue Arrow trials, the entire costs of the Maxwell trial have been borne by the public purse, because all three defendants were on legal aid. The cost will add weight to the inquiry by the Lord Chancellor into the availability of legal aid for people who enjoy apparently lavish lifestyles.

The legal teams have been working on the case for more than four years. The three defendants have employed counsel and solicitors on enhanced rates because of the complexity of the case. Queen's Counsel, for exam-

ple, may receive £257.50 per hour and solicitors up to £200 per hour.

The legal aid bill alone had reached £4.75 million by last May and is expected to be more than £11 million now.

The SFO estimates the costs of its whole investigation, which began in December 1991, a month after Robert Maxwell was found dead at sea, to be around £11 million.

The jury went out on day 121 of the trial, which was held in the Old Bailey's courtroom at Chichester Rents, specially adapted and equipped for lengthy fraud trials and used in the Blue Arrow and Barlow Clowes cases.

Crown Court trials cost on average £7,000 a day, but the daily cost of a trial involving large legal teams and the latest technology, such as instant transcription of evidence, will be much more.

The judge, jury, defendants and their lawyers, the press and the public all had sight of monitors displaying documents or parts of them as they were called in evidence via a computerised system called

Showcase, pioneered by Legal Technologies of London.

Each of the three defendants was represented by full teams of leading and junior counsel and solicitors. The prosecuting team was led by Alan Suckling, QC, and Richard Lissack, QC, with two juniors, and solicitors from the SFO.

Kevin Maxwell was represented by Alan Jones, QC, with Clare Montgomery and Leah Saffian. His solicitor is Keith Oliver from Peters & Peters.

Michael Hill, QC, led the defence for Larry Trachtenberg, with James Richardson as his junior. His solicitors were Russell Jones & Walker. Ian Maxwell was represented by Edmund Lawson, QC, and Peter Doyle, with John Clitheroe, senior partner of Kingsley Napley, as his solicitor.

The Maxwell brothers' entitlement to legal aid prompted a furore and questions in Parliament. Kevin Maxwell became eligible after being declared bankrupt owing £406.5 million.



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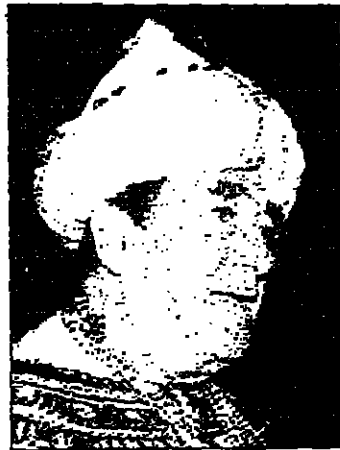
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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY

Multimillion-pound demolition of house that Bob built



Maxwell in party mood at the height of his powers

By JON ASHWORTH

AT ITS peak the Maxwell empire looked unstoppable — a sprawling colossus embracing 300 companies and with interests in newspapers and publishing on both sides of the Atlantic. But after Robert Maxwell's death it was exposed as a house of cards, built on uncertain foundations and shored up by multimillion-pound bank loans.

Four years on, Maxwell's public and private interests have been scattered far and wide. A controlling stake in Mirror Group Newspapers was sold more than two years ago and nearly £800 million was raised from the sale of two key assets: Macmillan, the New York-based publisher, and the Official

Airline Guide (OAG). Price Waterhouse, administrator of Maxwell Communication Corporation (MCC), the main quoted Maxwell company, has completed its asset sales and is mopping up disputed claims and outstanding legal action. More than \$1 billion (£662 million) has been raised from sales involving the 400 companies under the MCC umbrella, and creditors have received 31p in the pound. Total realisations could reach \$1.36 billion to \$1.45 billion (£900-£960 million), giving creditors a total payment of 30p to 42p in the pound.

The American disposals brought in the bulk of the spoils. Macmillan was sold to Paramount Communications for £371 million in Novem-

ber 1993. Reed Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch publisher, had bought OAG for £417 million two months earlier.

Mark Homan, senior joint administrator of MCC, said: "The back of the job is broken. It has been a phenomenally difficult assignment." Price Waterhouse had to deal with British and American law simultaneously, and had teams shuttling back and forth across the Atlantic.

A further 400 companies fell under the umbrella of privately owned Robert Maxwell Group (RMG). Interests spanned helicopters, market research and publishing interests in Hungary, Israel

and America. British holdings included a near 55 per cent stake in Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN), owner of titles including the *Daily Mirror* and *The Sporting Life*.

MGN continued to trade throughout the storm over Robert Maxwell's plundering of the pension funds and embarked on a fierce round of cost-cutting under David Montgomery, who was appointed chief executive in October 1992. Arthur Andersen, administrator to the Maxwell private companies, distributed the Maxwell stake among City institutions in September 1993, raising £373

million for the benefit of creditors and pensioners.

British International Helicopters was the last of the Maxwell private companies to be sold — to a management buyout in January 1993. Other private interests included AGB, the market research company, which is now part of Taylor Nelson AGB, the UK's largest market research company. AGB's assets in mainland Europe were sold separately.

One of Maxwell's pet newspaper interests, *The European*, was snapped up by the Barclay Brothers in January 1992. American subsidiaries of the investment company London & Bishopsgate were sold to a management buyout in February 1992. Maxwell Cable TV

and Nuffield Press were also sold to management teams. Stakes in Oxford United and Reading football clubs found buyers.

After seeking Chapter 11 protection, the New York *Daily News* was bought in October 1992 by Mort Zuckerman, an American property investor and magazine publisher. Back in London, MGN's former headquarters in Holborn stands vacant, awaiting redevelopment.

One of the few Maxwell companies to "get out in time" was British Printing Corporation, which prints many of Britain's biggest-selling magazines. It was bought from MCC by its management in January 1989, eight years after Robert Maxwell had added it to his expanding portfolio.

Result may harm legal attempts to retrieve fund's lost investments

By CAROLINE MERRELL AND KAREN ZAGOR

CIVIL cases against the Maxwell brothers to claim back millions of pounds in pension money may be affected by yesterday's verdicts, according to the solicitor for the 32,000 Mirror Group pensioners.

They have so far successfully clawed back £276 million from the missing £450 million fortune plundered from Robert Maxwell's companies. But not enough money has been recovered to enable future pensioners to exercise their right to take their pensions in a lump sum. However, there is enough money in the fund for current employees to collect their pensions when they retire.

John Fordham, of the London solicitors Stephenson and Harwood, was appointed to track down and recover missing funds from Maxwell's Bishopsgate Investment Management Ltd, which is now in liquidation.

After the verdicts he said: "Last year we recovered £276 million for the liquidators and pensioners, but this has not completely filled the hole left by the missing funds. The amount of lost money changes all the time but the total is thought to be around £450 million. It is estimated that around three quarters of this sum has been recovered."

He went on: "So far we have got enough money to pay out all the current pensions and those that will mature in the future, if people want them paid in the normal way. But at the moment there is not enough for people who want to take the pension in one lump sum."

Mr Fordham said he knew where the missing money had gone: "It was used to prop up failing businesses in the empire."

However, there is not thought to be a "pot of gold" hidden in a far country. "If there was a treasure trove stashed away, then it would have found by now by the liquidators."

He thought it was too early to say if the verdicts would affect any civil cases outstanding against the Maxwell brothers. "It should not have a direct result on them, but there could be an indirect bearing on their outcome."

There are several cases that have been prepared which are still in litigation between the parties.

"There are different standards of blame and proof required in civil and criminal

THE PENSIONERS



Ivy Needham, above, the 70-year-old pensioner appointed as MBE in the New Year Honours List for "services to Maxwell pensioners", has proved to be a redoubtable fighter. She said yesterday: "I heard the verdict on radio and just broke down and cried. Now the court has reached its not-guilty verdict can you please tell me, who was responsible for taking our pension fund money? We estimate that the case has cost as much as £30 million. That money could have been much better spent. There is nothing left for us in this country any more. The verdict still doesn't alter the fact that all my pensioners have been put through four years of living hell." Mrs Needham, who worked as a catering manager for 20 years at Betty's, the Leeds, printing firm taken over by the Maxwell empire, began her campaign to secure a safe future for herself and thousands of pensioners within months of Maxwell's death in November 1991.

"It may be a different case in civil proceedings and we have won before."

Ken Trench, chairman of the Mirror Pensioners' Action Group, said they would be asking for early publication of a report into how pensioners regulators failed to stop £450 million going missing from a £695 million pension fund.

His group's 32,000 members were satisfied with their

£276 million out-of-court settlement last year when he said, City institutions "finally responded to more than three years of pressure".

Mr Trench said it was essential to know what had gone wrong with the regulatory system so that action could be taken to stop anything like it happening again.

He said that after Robert Maxwell's death, when the pension losses came to light, the Securities and Investments Board had asked the Investment Management Regulatory Organisation to investigate what went wrong. "A report was produced by IMRO but we still don't know what was in it. We were told it would be published but it was sub judice until the end of the trial that has just finished."

"We now intend to ask when the report will be published. We need to know what it says so everyone knows what went wrong and what needs to be done to protect pension funds in future."

Tony Boram, chairman of the Association of Mirror Pensioners, said they were "devastated" at the verdicts. "Millions of pounds in pension money is still missing. Perhaps the Maxwells will backtrack and help us find it," he said.

"We started the legal challenge in 1991 before Robert Maxwell died because we felt he was abusing the fund. All I wish is that he were here to face the music."

"Because I was part of the Mirror Group, we had a company to protect us. The Mirror stepped in and helped, but others were in a much worse situation."

Doug Bristow, former director of British Printing and Communication Corporation and on the consulting committee of the Maxwell Pension Plan, said: "Luckily everyone rallied round. The banks were good and Parliament was extremely good. The global settlement arranged in March restored the majority of the pension money. But there was a time when some people thought they might get nothing from their pension and it was very worrying to think about what would happen to their widows and children if they died."

Bob Avery, who worked for the *Daily Mirror* for 35 years and is on the Mirror Association of Pensioners committee, said: "I am not at all pleased. It seems as if justice has not been done. I feel very sad for the others who have suffered more than I have."



Pandora Maxwell and her daughter Madeleine, 3, born at an NHS hospital

Gruelling trial did not thwart family ambitions

By CAROL MIDDLEY

PANDORA

IF ONE person has found a shred of comfort amid the ruins of the Maxwell empire, it is Pandora Maxwell. The feisty wife of Kevin, who, mistaking them for reporters, let fly at the two policemen who called at the door to arrest her husband, is five months pregnant with their sixth child.

It speaks volumes about Pandora, 37, that she refused to let the lengthy trial interfere with her plans for a bigger family. Ironically, the Maxwell fiasco has enabled her to fulfil one of her ambitions — to abandon London and live with her family far from the maddening crowd.

Today, their £1.5 million home in Chelsea is sold and the family is settled in a 10-bedroom country house shared with her parents, John and Ruth Warnford-Davis.

"She always wanted to bring up her children in the country and so in a peculiar, roundabout way she has got what she wanted," said Debbie Grossman, the wife of Loyd Grossman, the tele-

vision presenter, and a close friend of Pandora's.

"She wanted to be near her parents — she adores family life — and all her time is now taken up looking after five children. With Kevin in court for the past few months she has been virtually coping on her own."

Yesterday as the not-guilty verdicts came in, Pandora was, as usual, picking the children up from school. "I haven't even told Pandora yet," said Kevin as he walked to his solicitors office.

In the small Oxfordshire village of Moulshof, Pandora and Kevin Maxwell have set great store by keeping a low profile. Although they moved in to the former Moulshof Manor Hotel, the wartime retreat for Sir Winston Churchill bought 18 months ago by Mr and Mrs Warnford-Davis, locals say they see the family rarely.

But although the family are living in relative luxury — the children still attend private schools, the fees paid by godparents and loyal friends

— lifestyles have changed. Home now, though large, is ramshackle. The whitewash is cracked and peeling and much of the building is undergoing renovation.

The live-in nanny and domestic staff who helped Pandora with her children in London are gone and her days now are a constant round of washing, cooking and cleaning. The couple's last child, Madeleine, was born in an NHS hospital.

The woman who, after meeting Kevin at Oxford University, married him in 1984 largely against Robert Maxwell's wishes, is said to have clashed occasionally with her father-in-law.

Throughout the trial her strength has been "like steel", friends say. Pandora said: "It's obviously a difficult time but I'm just getting on with it. Tilly [10, their eldest child] is my unpaid helper and she's marvellous."

One former acquaintance of Kevin's said: "Pandora has shown herself to be one of life's survivors. She doesn't really give a damn what people think of her as long as her family is OK."

Widow is still paying price for the sins of her husband

By CAROL MIDDLEY

BETTY MAXWELL spent most of her life in the shadow of her imperious husband. Today, though free of his tyranny, she continues to pay the price for his sins. She has lost her home in Britain, most of her possessions, and has become a hate figure to many Mirror pensioners. To add to her burdens her health has suffered too.

According to friends she recently developed a stomach tumour, possibly brought on by the strain of the family crisis. It was treated in her native country, France, and apparently cured.

But Dr Elisabeth Maxwell, as she prefers to be addressed, has not only inherited a legacy of despair from Robert Maxwell. More than four years after his death, she remains devoted to his passion, promoting Anglo-Israel relations.

Although not converted — she was born a French protestant — she spends much of her time in London attending meetings and doing good works for Jewish causes.

Currently she is on the executive committee of the Anglo-Israel Association, an independent charity in London which aims to foster good relations and understanding between the two countries.

Her work, which has included sponsoring the first major conference on the Holocaust in Britain, inspired the American Zionist Youth Foundation to appoint her Grand Marshal of the 1995 Salute to Israel parade in New York.

She is also a writer — her autobiography, *A Mind of My Own*, was published in 1994 — a well-respected lecturer and charity worker.

But though Maxwell's interests remain in her life, the trappings of his wealth do not. The former châtelineau of Headington Hill Hall, Oxford, married to Maxwell for more than 40 years, now resides what she terms a "microscopic" mid-terrace town house in Putney, south-west London, let to her at a peppercorn rent by the Duke of Westminster.

An irritated voice which answers the security intercom

outside the four-bedroom Georgian building informs callers that, no, Dr Maxwell does not wish to talk to anybody, before the receiver is slammed down.

A £3 million chateau at Montagnac Sur Leze, south-west France, which Maxwell bought for her as a last, extravagant birthday gift, has been mortgaged "to the hilt" to provide money for Kevin and Ian's legal bills.

Dr Maxwell, 74, describes the place as "completely stark" with "nothing on the walls".

When in France she prefers to stay with her sister, Yvonne Vittoz, who is a retired doctor, in a modest house at Maisons-Laffitte, the racing town outside Paris. Headington Hill Hall where she raised her



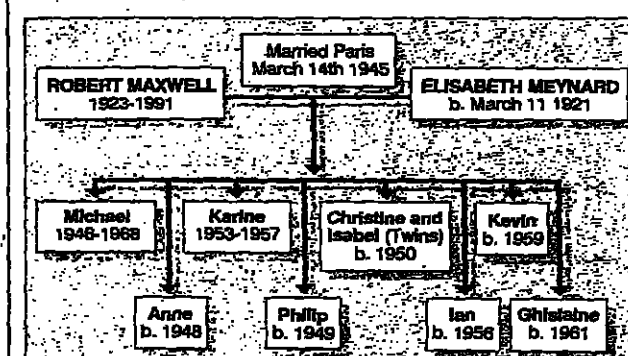
Betty Maxwell: works for Jewish causes

family has returned to its owner, Oxford City Council.

As a wife and mother Betty Maxwell endured years of tragedy and humiliation. Two of her nine children died, Karine of leukaemia in 1957 when three and Michael in 1961. He had been kept alive for seven years in hospital after a car crash but never awoke.

She suffered the indignity of her husband's obsession with his assistant, Andrea Martin, but insists: "He was besotted, nothing more."

But even after the empire collapsed in ruins, she continued to profess her love for him.



The reluctant Daddy's girl Model wife stands by man

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

GHISLAINE



death on the yacht that he named after his favourite child. She said she liked the pace of New York, but it may have been she was also wearying of being used by Maxwell.

He had her pose in front of a load of banknotes for a *Daily Mirror* bungo promotion, and elaborately placed her on the boards of Oxford United and *The European*, reckoning that

his pretty daughter represented the more acceptable face of Maxwell capitalism. In London she lived at his increasingly brusque beck and call. In New York, although she officially took a job as a reporter on Maxwell's *Daily News*, she knew she would be more free to do as she liked.

These days Miss Maxwell, who was thoroughly vetted (and cleared) by fraud investigators after her father's death, lives in a modest apartment on Manhattan's well-cushioned Upper East Side. When not working, she spends an increasing amount of her time with the suave Wall Streeteer Jeffrey Epstein, with whom she is said to be "bevoiced".

Friends of Miss Maxwell believe Mr Epstein may be the man to relieve her of her membership of the "on-the-shelfers", a group of vivacious, 30-something English girls who chose their nickname on account of their enduring spinsterhood.

By CAROL MIDDLEY

HOME for Laura Maxwell, the former fashion model who once entertained her husband Ian's business friends at a £300,000 Belgravia apartment, is now a rented, two-bedroom house in an Islington square.

Outside there are none of the expensive cars that five years ago were a permanent feature in their Belgravia square. Ian Maxwell drives a BMW that "has seen better days" while his wife, uses a moped. The green paint on the front door is peeling. The curtains, say neighbours, invariably stay closed, shutting out the view of a high-rise council block.

While her husband has been in court, Laura Maxwell has continued to devote energy to her work organising finance for British films. Last year she managed to secure a medium budget for a Shakespearean film. Previously she

LAURA



worked for United Artists, helping to set up the women's interest channel, UK Living, and the Discovery Channel.

"It's a great relief to get on with my own work, independent of the very public difficulties in which Ian and his family are involved," is all she would say on the matter.

A near neighbour said: "They have been here for over

a year but not a single one of the neighbours has spoken a word to them. All we really see of them is when they are coming and going. They get very few visitors here. Every weekend they go away but nobody knows where."

Described as a gentle and sensitive mid-western American girl, Laura, 33, has taken the public hostility shown to her husband badly. She is fiercely loyal and collapsed in tears while Ian was being questioned at Snow Hill police station.

After leaving a Boston college, she then Laura Plumb led a glamorous life modelling in Europe. She returned to Minnesota to start a career in television and it was at a London party hosted by a cable TV company that she met Ian. Five months after their wedding Robert Maxwell was dead.

The couple made a joint decision to delay starting a family until after the trial.

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'Tears flooded down my face — it was such an overwhelming feeling'

Crippled woman learns to stand

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

A WOMAN paralysed from the waist down in a car accident five years ago has learnt to stand again with the aid of a computer-operated device implanted in her spine. Julie Hill, 34, who has been confined to a wheelchair since the accident, presses differently coloured buttons on a battery pack strapped to her waist to stand or sit.

Mrs Hill, from Chichester, West Sussex, is the first person in the world to be fitted with the device, which sends tiny electrical impulses to the base of her spine to stimulate the muscles in her legs. "When I stood up for the first time, tears flooded down my face. It was such an overwhelming feeling. It is so good to be able to look at someone eye-to-eye and not have them towering above you," she said.

Her operation was carried out at Salisbury District Hospital before Christmas 1994 but details were not released until yesterday. More than a year later, she has taken her first half-dozen shaky steps.

Mrs Hill, who is married with two sons aged 13 and 11,

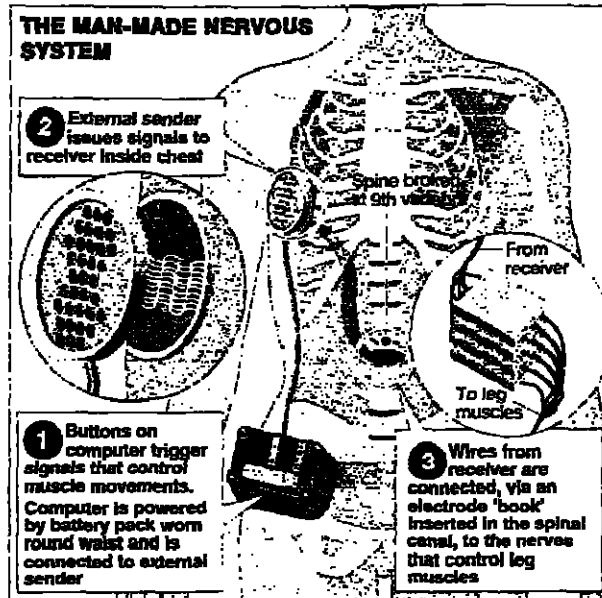
said: "I look and feel physically fitter. I can choose to sit and stand at will. Unless you have lost something completely you cannot fully appreciate what that means."

"I am a woman and care about how I look. The shape of my legs improved and I was able to feel comfortable in shorts this summer for the first time since my accident."

Nick Donaldson, a bio-engineer who played a vital part in developing the device, said: "Julie has been the ideal patient. She could not have been better."

The eight-hour operation involved implanting a small receiver inside her chest cavity against her ribcage. A dozen wires from the receiver fan out to the base of her spine, below the point where it was broken when the car she was travelling in somersaulted after a tyre blow-out.

The surgeon, Tony Tromans, attached the wires to 12 motor nerves, six each side, where they emerge from the spinal cord in a bundle called the *cauda equina* (horse's tail). A transmitter powered



by the battery pack is fitted under her arm sending pre-programmed radio signals to the implanted receiver.

The control box containing a computer chip is carried with the battery pack. Programming it to stimulate the right nerves in the right order was achieved by trial and error. Tim Perkins, a bio-engineer

operation in which she was taught how to stand with external electrical stimulation via electrodes attached to her thighs and buttocks. The experience was gruelling but she was determined to succeed.

The operation is an important advance in the development of electrical stimulation systems to help patients with spinal cord injuries. But researchers are cautious about the system's potential as a walking device. They say future development may allow paraplegics such as Mrs Hill "stepping" access from wheelchair to bed or from car to house door, but it is many years away.

Mrs Hill said: "Developing walking is a distant possibility. I think the wheelchair is always going to be my main means of mobility. But limited walking would mean easier access in awkward transfer situations."

The project, a joint effort by the Salisbury Spinal Unit, University College London, the Royal London hospital and the Royal National Orthopaedic hospital, is featured in a BBC Television *Inside Story* documentary on February 1.

INSIDE



Kid's Stuff
The amazing child stars of the Cirque du Soleil and their lives as circus animals in 1015 the magazine for young Times readers, inside the Magazine today



Julie Hill stands up. An implant in her spine stimulates nerves to make her leg muscles work

Lord who ran amok is spared jail term

By A STAFF REPORTER

VISCOUNT POLLINGTON narrowly avoided being sent to prison yesterday for crimes committed after he turned to drink when he found his sister dead from a drug overdose.

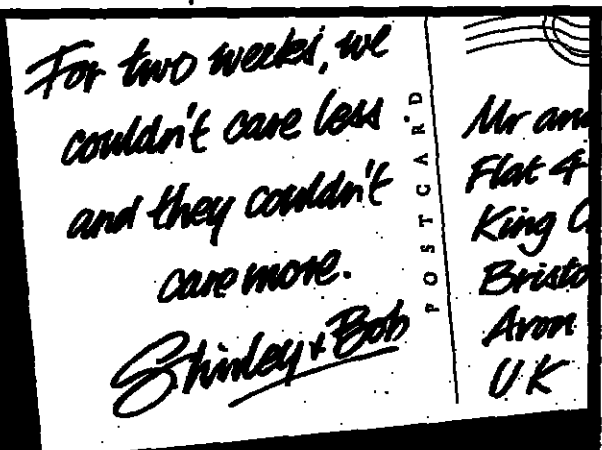
The 36-year-old international yachtsman, heir to the Earl of Mexborough, discovered the body of Lady Alethea Savile at her home in Chelsea 15 months ago, the Old Bailey was told. "He adored her," David Etherington, for Pollington, said.

His client went berserk outside his local pub in Knightsbridge in July, waving a gun and terrifying customers. A month later he threatened staff at a Chelsea off-

licence after a woman refused to serve him.

Yesterday he admitted possession of an imitation gun and affray. He was put on probation for two years on condition that he receives medical treatment for drink and drug problems. He was also ordered to do 100 hours' community service.

Recorder Heather Hallett, QC, told Pollington that although he had been at a very low ebb "it does not excuse your behaviour". "If you do not carry on with your efforts or repeat behaviour of this kind — or if anyone is ever hurt — no court would give you another chance."



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a question of sport

How much live coverage did the BBC ever give to England's overseas test matches against Australia, the West Indies, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and New Zealand?

(for the answer, turn over the page)

FAMILY HOLIDAYS: Brian MacArthur on the teen scene in Turkey and Paul Hoggart visits Legoland



Hidden agenda: wise planning means that hotels and apartment blocks are never more than two storeys high at Olu Deniz, so they cannot be seen from the glorious beach

Say Turkey and the image conjured up will almost certainly be of the sweeping curve of the beach at Olu Deniz with its lagoon at one end and majestic mountains behind.

It was here last summer that I tried an experiment. At 16, teenagers are on the cusp: they don't really want to go on holiday with their parents but they are not yet quite ready to go off on their own. After the ordeal of GCSEs, they certainly don't want an earnest cultural holiday. At the top of the agenda is a sunny beach

Spreading their wings

by day and a throbbing disco by night.

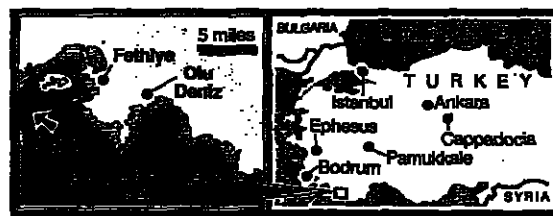
Olu Deniz, an hour-and-a-half from Dalaman airport after a four-hour flight, is a summer tourist resort on the Lycian coast which offers decent hotels, a superb beach, and a sense of adventure by night without any of the accompanying sense of menace that reportedly hangs over centres such as Bodrum. It is

also conveniently situated for excursions to some of the great sights of Turkey at Ephesus, Pamukkale and Cappadocia, or (for £105) an overnight visit to Istanbul.

We went half-board on a Thomson package to the Olu Deniz Resort Hotel, situated at the easternmost end of the beach, away from the most crowded areas and set in small blocks, where we had spacious rooms with balconies overlooking lush gardens bursting with fruit and flowers. The beach was a two-minute walk away, although several tourists (British) preferred to spend their days by the hotel pool.

Once booked in, cash was banished. Guests buy books of vouchers which are used to pay for drinks and meals that are not included in the package. At breakfast and dinner, the tables groaned with mountainous selections of hors d'oeuvres, chicken, lamb, fish, vegetables and fruit.

Turkey fact file: where to stay



□ The author was a guest of Thomson Discover Turkey.

□ A seven-night stay at the Olu Deniz Resort Hotel costs from £299, including flights, room and breakfast, and a week half board from £315. There are departures from 12 British airports.

□ Brochures are available from travel agents or by calling the Thomson Holiday Shop (0171-707 9000).

My daughter and her friend slept until nearly 10am, before setting off for a day on the beach, swimming, sunbathing and reading, interrupted when the heat became intolerable by a cheap snack at one of the restaurants behind the beach.

Once dinner was over, by

nine, the night was young. Music, Western and Turkish, wafted on the warm night air, along with the sweet-smelling smoke from the barbecues. This was when the girls set off into the night, an anxious parent left behind with the thought that girls cannot always be protected if they are to

grow up and learn to cope on their own — but it was difficult, though not without a few worrying moments when they had not returned to the hotel by midnight. But they were enjoying themselves hugely, meeting boys of all nationalities in the discos, afterwards sitting on the beach playing guitars.

Olu Deniz would not be to everybody's taste. It is now a mass tourist resort, although in early July it was not unbearably overcrowded. Geography and wise planning also give it one big advantage. Behind the beach the land falls back, so from the sea and the beach, the hotels, all only one or two storeys high, cannot be seen and you feel that you are swimming directly under the mountains.

Yet in the dip behind the beach there has grown a busy, bustling, makeshift "high street", a promenade of restaurants, cafes, bazaars, bars and discos. At night, the resort throbs with life and music. It is lively without being jollyish, crowded or brutishly noisy.

It was not a holiday I would have chosen myself but it was enthusiastically voted a success by the two girls.

Mini village is a model of ingenuity

Americans like saccharine fantasy. The British enjoy old-world funfair vulgarity. The descendants of the mighty Viking Sven Forkbeard, however, have a 25-acre theme park devoted to tiny, noddled bricks.

The Danish inventor, Ole Kirk Christiansen, is a most unjust omission from the Nobel Peace Prize roll. Lego is capable of tranquillising a hyperactive monster in seconds.

Ole bought his first plastic moulding machine in 1947, and his tricky little cuboids appeared soon afterwards. By the early Sixties the factory in Billund, Denmark, had so many visitors that his son Godfred decided to create an outdoor exhibition of models. Legoland opened in 1968, and Lilleby, the original model village, still lurks in the middle, a bonsai version of the world outside.

Today the park offers rides and activities, primarily for young children, but these are peripheral to what must be the world's largest and most intricate model village. I knew my children (aged three, six and nine) would love it, but expected to find it a trifle naïf myself. I was won over.

The heart of the park is Miniland, a vast area of reconstructed landmarks and landscapes, mainly from Teutonic Europe. There are palaces and castles, harbours, waterways and mountain villages, all meticulously copied from life.

I found the Norwegian Lofoten island fishing village particularly charming. "Medbourne", an English town modelled on buildings in Chester, York and Stamford, is drab in comparison.

The most exotic exhibits are grouped around the mini-boat ride. A Lego Capitol sits beside a 30ft Statue of Liberty. The Acropolis and the Golden Temple of Bangkok squat amid the mini vegetation.

Beyond Miniland lies a primary-coloured toytown. Everything not actually built of Lego or Duplo (the chunky

junior version) is made to resemble them. Here a Lego chef stands outside a cafe; there a Lego Indian skulls on a frontier sidewalk. The "theming" is ferociously detailed. One cafe serves Lego-shaped chips.

The park has a fine selection of "pink-knuckle" rides, exciting enough to thrill the under-10s. The best are the timber ride, a log-effect roller-coaster, the Mine Train and Lego Canoe, which winds past life-size American wilderness animals before plunging down a water-splash. Toy animals abound, particularly on Lego Safari, a jeep ride through an African game reserve.

In Legoland, the western frontier town, visitors can pan for gold or join the Indian tribe of Chief Playing Eagle. There's even a campfire where, for a small fee, you can bake twists of fresh bread skewered on twigs.

For the very young, Duplo-land offers helicopter, train and plane rides, and if it rains there's an indoor area with thousands of bricks lying around to play with.

To get an overview, start with the train ride round the park, or ascend Legopod, the 40-metre, revolving viewing platform. You can just about cover the park in one day but two-day passes are good value.

The Legoland Hotel is in the park, but there are many interesting places to visit in the area. We stayed in the Munkelbjerg Hotel in Vejle, half an hour down the road, set in a wooded park full of sculptures and overlooking a fjord. The Hans Christian Andersen museum at Odense is within easy reach.

The new Legoland at Windsor is due to open this year. I wonder how well the phlegmatic Danish charm will survive the transition.

● The author and his family were guests of Munkelbjerg Hotel, Munkelbjergvej 52, Grovstovvej, Vejle, Denmark. Tel: (45) 75 33 0066 and the Danish Tourist Board, 55 Sloane Street, London SW1X 9SY (0171-259 5958).

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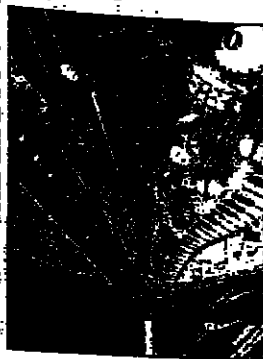
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'Morally we are in the right. We took on the banks and won but we have lost everything'

Lloyds wins £100,000 from couple given bad business advice

BY PAUL WILKINSON

A COUPLE who won compensation for bad advice from Lloyds Bank in a landmark case faced bankruptcy yesterday after a High Court judge ruled they must pay the bank £100,000 plus costs.

Damages of £77,500 awarded last September to Richard Spindler and Julia Verity after a judge ruled that the bank had been negligent in dealing with a property development were wiped out yesterday by a successful counter-claim and costs awarded in favour of Lloyds.

Outside court the couple, from Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, said they still believed that they were in the right, although the costs will probably bankrupt them. They plan to appeal. Mr Spindler, 36, an acupuncturist, said: "We proved that Lloyds were negligent, but

through a legal device they have come out on top financially. We have lost everything. We face costs of £250,000 and damages to the bank of £25,000, but we can still hold our head up. We changed the way banks look at advice given to their borrowers. Morally we are in the right. We took on the big banks and won."

Mrs Verity, 55, a former primary teacher, said: "We face bankruptcy. We will probably lose our house and be out on the street, but we can still enjoy ourselves even if we do it as tramps. We have no regrets about bringing the case but it is a relief that it is over. We have had this hanging over us for so long."

The High Court decision last September alarmed the banking world after Judge Robert Taylor, sitting in Leeds, ruled that Lloyds had been negligent with its advice

when the couple took a £160,000 loan in 1988 to buy and renovate a Victorian house in their home town.

The collapse of the property market over the next two years and unforeseen costs of £25,000 meant the house could not be sold at a profit and in the meantime they ran up huge debts with the bank on other loans including mortgages on the two houses they already owned.

But Lloyds counter-claimed for more than £141,000, still owed by the couple on those loans. Yesterday, after a four-day hearing at Leeds, Judge Taylor rejected the couple's argument that the debt to the bank on the investment loan had been extinguished when that property was sold, even though the money raised did not cover the debt to the bank.

The judge also discounted their claim that money from the sale of Mr Spindler's



Richard Spindler and Julia Verity: they face a legal bill of £250,000 after a successful counter-claim by Lloyds

house should have been used to settle their mortgages and other advances and not to cover the business loan given to buy the investment property. The court heard yesterday that at an earlier stage in the legal proceedings Lloyds had offered to reduce the amount

they were claiming by £100,000 and to pay all the couple's costs but they rejected the offer.

With interest calculations, which still have to be completed, the couple will owe the bank approximately £25,000. However, the judge also

awarded the bank all the costs of its counterclaim and half those of the couple's original claim because it had not succeeded on all its points.

Last night Miss Verity and Mr Spindler disclosed that they planned to separate. They said, however, that they were

not splitting up because of the eight-year legal battle but because of their age difference. Mrs Verity is 55, her companion is 19 years her junior.

Mrs Verity said: "I shall be grandmother soon and Richard wants to have children of his own."

Weather delays two balloon expeditions

The Moroccan launch of Richard Branson's round-the-world balloon flight was delayed last night by a frontal depression over North Africa expected to last at least five days. Martin Harris, a co-pilot of the *Virgin Challenger* and a professional meteorologist, said in Marrakech: "If we went now, the *Challenger* would be propelled north and could encounter heavy ice. Up to a ton of ice can bring the *Challenger* prematurely to the ground."

A Dutch attempt to orbit the globe by balloon also faces a delay of at least five days. A persistent front of high pressure over Russia, causing a strong southeasterly wind, has grounded the *Unicef Flyer*. Its pilot, Henk Brink, 52, is waiting to ascend from Eindhoven.

Cancer hopes dashed

Two American trials have shown that pills containing the nutrient beta-carotene do not protect against cancer or heart disease. Many doctors had attributed the healthy effects of diets high in fruit and vegetables to beta-carotene. One trial was terminated 21 months early when it showed that the risks to smokers were increased. Smokers taking the supplement had a 28 per cent higher chance of getting cancer.

Children to serve drink

Teenagers too young to drink alcohol are to be allowed to serve drinks in pubs and hotels under government proposals for a three-year apprenticeship. Licensing laws are to be changed to allow 16 and 17-year-olds to serve in bars. Campaigners for sensible drinking, including Dr John Rae of the Portman Group, said that it would be difficult for young men and women aged 16 and 17 to refuse to serve alcohol to people under age.

Rail executive found

A senior Railtrack executive who vanished 11 days ago from his home in Solihull, West Midlands, was found safe yesterday. Peter Monaghan, 48, was recognised by a hotel manager in north London after his wife made an appeal for him to return home. Mr Monaghan had left home saying he was going to work but did not arrive at his London office. Last night he was being treated in hospital for a stress-related illness.

Diet deceiver jailed

Peter Foster, 33, the former boyfriend of the model Samantha Fox, was jailed for two years after being convicted at Liverpool Crown Court of conspiracy over a bogus diet. Judge Richard Hamilton recommended that Foster, an Australian who had been living in Basset, London, be deported. The "Deakin Diet", named after a former Young Slimmer of the Year, was offered for sale by Foster under a false trade description.

Princess visit arrests

Two Sinn Féin protesters were arrested in Dublin yesterday after they broke into the grounds of the British Embassy hours before the Princess Royal was due to open the new building. They were released without charge. In a separate incident two men were arrested in Castlebar, Co Mayo, when an Irish tricolor flag was unfurled as Prince Edward arrived in the town.

Lorry drivers held

Two Austrian lorry drivers were being interviewed yesterday over a hit and run accident on Thursday in which Amy Durling, 15, from Herne Bay, Kent, died as she delivered newspapers on her bicycle. Kent police said that one lorry had been stopped in Wolverhampton and a second was held at Bradford. Both drivers were taken to Kent for questioning.

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Blair rejects fierce attack Major denounces social chapter as 'immoral tax'

By JILL SHERMAN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

THE social chapter is an immoral European tax on jobs, John Major said yesterday as he presented his own vision of an "enterprise economy". Mounting a defiant fightback after rumours at Westminster of a new plot to oust him, the Prime Minister signalled that the social chapter would become one of the main battlegrounds with Labour in the run-up to the general election.

In a move that will delight Tory Euro-sceptics, he employed some of his strongest language to criticise rulings by Brussels on workers' rights. Speaking to the Institute of Directors in Birmingham, Mr Major warned of the future impact of more regulations on employment and social issues, claiming the social chapter was a "blank cheque".

He contrasted the rise in unemployment in Germany, France, Italy and Spain with the fall in Britain. "The social chapter should be seen for what it is, a European jobs tax — a tax on jobs by the front door and in time, a tax on jobs by the back door."

"That's why it's immoral. That's why, if I'd signed the social chapter I could never have looked the unemployed in the eye again."

Tony Blair, also on a visit to the Midlands, immediately dismissed Mr Major's attack

as "exaggerated, violent and ludicrous". He pointed out that the social chapter had proposed only two legal changes, one on employees' rights and one on parental leave.

"Every single other conservative party in Europe is in favour of the social chapter, as is every other conservative government," he told BBC Radio 4's *The World At One*.

Mr Major and Mr Blair set out their own alternative visions — "enterprise" against "stakeholder" — of how to secure greater prosperity for people in Britain.

Mr Major reaffirmed his long-term aim of abolishing inheritance and capital gains taxes and bringing down government spending as a share of national income. "Enterprise is at the heart of a free and prosperous society. With enterprise comes risk, but also reward. It creates competitiveness and builds prosperity and economic growth," he said.

Developing another theme that will be central to Tory general election strategy, he said: "Our enterprise economy is not negotiable. Our economic success is too valuable to be destroyed by experiments."

Mr Blair, speaking to 400 businessmen and women at a breakfast meeting in Nottingham, received a mixed reac-

tion as he defended his idea of a stakeholder economy. There would be no sweeping repeal of trade union laws and unions would not be treated with special favours. "We all want to see a successful, enterprising Britain but we cannot achieve that without commitment to education, skills and new technology."

A strong economy would build Britain's strength in Europe, he said. "It is because of the weakness of our leadership at home that we are weak in Europe."

He later told the Press Association: "It is all very well the Conservatives talking about delivering an enterprise economy. They have had 16 years and they have failed and it is time for a new approach based on an economy in which everyone has a stake."

Mr Major's Birmingham speech coincided with reports that he had overruled Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, in his decision to publish a White Paper on the Government's position on Europe in the run-up to the intergovernmental conference.

Mr Clarke is believed to have circulated a paper to his Cabinet colleagues outlining his objections to its publication. He was concerned that a White Paper could box in the Government and, at the same time, split the party.



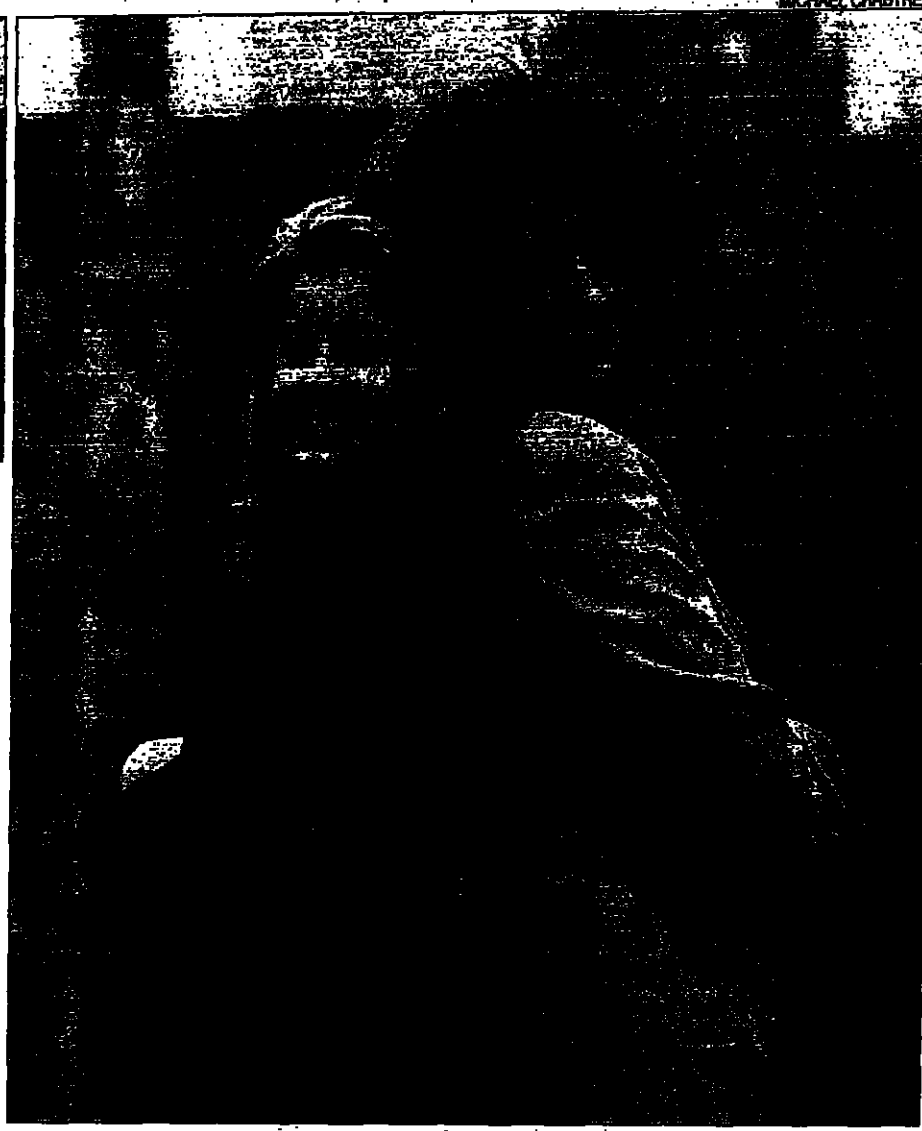
Prince Edward: his firm has spent "a fortune"

Prince's TV soap smells of politics

THOSE who claim that British politics is more sleazy soap opera than serious democratic government may be about to be proved right (Alice Thomson writes). Prince Edward's company, Ardent Productions, has spent "a fortune" producing a TV series based on the life and times of aspiring backbench MPs, which they hope will be "racier than *EastEnders*".

The series begins on Channel 4 on February 1 and will be known as *Annie's Bar* in honour of the House of Commons watering hole. It will be set in and around the Palace of Westminster.

As so often in real life, politics will take a back seat to the romantic peccadilloes and financial shenanigans of our elected representatives. Tory wives are found anxiously chewing their pearls at home while their husbands



Sarah Jones, left, and Stefanie Pitt will star in the TV series *Annie's Bar*

chase American research assistants around the sofas of the gentleman's club on the Thames.

Whips bully recalcitrant MPs in the lavatories and, over crumpets in the tea-room, sacked ministers vow revenge. The plot each week will closely mirror the news with stories on women-only shortlists, stakeholder economics, a prime minister

called John Major who is in deep trouble and several Tory MPs on the chicken run desperately searching for new safer seats.

MPs, journalists and spin-doctors as well as Sir Anthony Jay, co-author of *Yes Minister*, have acted as advisers to the soap.

Edwina Currie, Screaming Lord Sutch and Ken Livingstone have been asked

to play themselves, but the rest of the characters are meant to be fictional, with names such as Stiggie Bedford-Bounds.

Producers know that they are taking the risk that the real lives of MPs will remain more scandalous than their own series. What credible plotline could include a toe-sucking minister and a spurned actress?

Daylight Bill is wrecked as time runs out

By ALICE THOMSON
POLITICAL REPORTER

PLANS to move British clocks an hour forward to be in line with Europe were scrapped yesterday after a heated debate in the Commons. Time ran out for John Butterfill's plans when Scottish Office Ministers lined up with Scottish nationalists, northern Labour MPs and Tory Euro-sceptics to wreck the Bill.

Mr Butterfill (C, Bournemouth W) was seven votes short of getting his Bill through to committee stage. He gathered 93 votes in favour of a motion to close debate on his *British Time (Extra Daylight) Bill* but needed 100 to go to a final vote.

The House had not been so full on a Friday since the anti-hunting Bill a year ago. MPs were jeered by their own benches and the House was split much on geographical lines. There were recriminations on both sides about the way statistics had been "massaged". Campaigners for the Bill were livid that Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, had insisted that the 130 MPs on the government payroll should not vote, yet his own ministers were exempted.

Mr Butterfill emphasised that road safety was the main reason that a change in time was needed. He said an extra hour of light in the evenings would help to cut accidents for the young, the elderly and those returning from work.

He said his case was backed by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, the RAC, AA, builders, British Safety Council, British Medical Association, Police Federation and 300 businesses.

Peter Hain (Lab, Neath) said a White Paper in 1970 showed accidents to postmen doubled the last time double summertime was tried. Mr Butterfill said the Communication Workers Union did not back that view.

Sir Hector Monro (C, Dumfriesshire) asked: "What would the people of London say if this Bill was imposed on them in a way that they were in darkness at 10.45 in the morning? There would be a riot."

Lilley orders clampdown to cut £730m housing benefit fraud

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

PETER LILLEY pledged yesterday to get tougher on housing benefit fraud after a government survey disclosed it was costing the taxpayer at least £730 million a year.

Labour MPs seized on the finding that most money lost through fraud was in the private sector, and said that unscrupulous landlords rather than tenants were more likely to cheat taxpayers.

Mr Lilley, the Social Security

Secretary, said the survey of 52 local authorities showed housing benefit fraud was costing up to £1 billion. It forms the bulk of illegal social security claims, estimated to total £2.4 billion a year.

Mr Lilley announced a series of measures to cut housing benefit abuse by up to 70 per cent, including £10 million for councils to help them to set up regular investigations. Ministers also plan to use computer technology to streamline the system to prevent multiple "cross-border" claims in different benefit areas.

The study said one in five housing benefit claims was fraudulent or incorrect, but error was almost twice as prevalent as fraud. Unemployed people were more likely to commit fraud, with about 12 per cent of claims from this group found or suspected of being fraudulent. Seven per cent of lone parents were suspected or found guilty of fraud. Three in ten frauds involved deception about the amount or existence of earnings.

Mr Lilley said it would take several years for the measures to

have an impact on benefit abuse, particularly where organised fraud has taken root.

"It is a huge amount of money, whichever way you look at it, and we are determined to stop it. It is both landlords and tenants. A lot of them drift into it, accidentally, perhaps, initially, and find it difficult to get out. That is why it is even more important to prevent and deter fraud in the first place than it is to detect it once it gets under way," he said.

An inquiry into benefit fraud has

been launched by the Commons Social Security Select Committee, and it will particularly study the scale of fraud by private-sector landlords.

Members of the committee have suggested that a single landlord may make housing benefit claims on behalf of dozens of fictitious residents under rules that allow payments to be made direct to landlords. Some are believed to have claimed up to £1 million fraudulently.

Chris Smith, Shadow Social Sec-

urity Secretary, said that moves to counter fraud were welcome but long overdue. He urged Mr Lilley to review his departmental arrangements because of the high incidence of error.

Andrew Webster, head of the local authority investigation officers group, said the clampdown could expose even greater levels of fraud. "We reckon it accounts for about 20 per cent of the £10.6 billion paid out last year... and it could be more than that," he said on the BBC Radio 4 programme *Today*.

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Inaugural winner invited to spread message after competition combining fun and serious intent

Search begins for preacher to champion spoken word

BY RUTH GURDILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

The search for the country's best preacher resumes today with the launch of the second Preacher of the Year Award. Preachers from churches of all denominations and their congregations are invited to submit sermons for the award, organised by the College of Preachers and sponsored by The Times.

The award is open to all lay and ordained preachers aged over 18 with regular access to a preaching platform or pulpit. Preachers can enter themselves or be entered by their congregations, but no preacher should be entered without their permission.

Last year's winner, the Rev Barry Overend from St Chad's in Leeds, was selected from 500 entries. His winning sermon was broadcast live on BBC Radio 4 and he was invited to preach elsewhere and to deliver a new year's message on local television. He urged preachers to enter or allow their congregations to enter them. He said: "The final in London did not feel like a competition because I was preaching in a church full of people."

Five preachers will be selected from a shortlist of 30 for this year's final, to be held at Southwark Cathedral on Wednesday, October 30. It will again take place in the context

of a service of prayer and meditation, interspersed with sermons.

The Right Rev Michael Turnbull, Bishop of Durham, who is chairman of the council of the College of Preachers and who will chair the judging panel, said: "Preaching the word of God is an indispensable part of the Christian tradition. As a means of communication it is still valid and powerful."

"An element of competition is a good thing. The award is partly a bit of fun, and partly a serious attempt to raise the standards of preaching among all of us."

Those wanting to enter should submit a typed manuscript. Entries will not be accepted. The closing date for entries is March 31. The winner will receive a specially commissioned sculpture. The five runners-up will receive commemorative plaques, and the sermons of all 30 shortlisted preachers will be published in *The Times Book of Best Sermons* by Cassell.

The 30 sermons shortlisted last year are available now in *The Times Book of Best Sermons* (Cassell £9.99).

Cardinal Hume, page 20
At Your Service, Weekend, page 5



The Rev Barry Overend, the winner of last year's award, whose sermon was broadcast on Radio 4

Look beyond biblical stories if you seek God's inspiration

Barry Overend

TERRIFIC hymns. Pity about the Bible reading. One verse should suffice to substantiate my sense of regret: "His brains oozed out on the ground, his limbs twitched, and he died."

The oozing brains and the twitching limbs were those of Sisera, the Canaanite commander, who was brought to a bloody end by the Israelite heroine Jael. In an ancient, male-dominated society, Jael struck a blow for feminism by hammering a tent peg into Sisera's head as he slept.

The last time I heard that Bible story, from Judges iv, read in public was at a cathedral service during which choristers from all over the region were presented with their choral awards. Naturally there were a lot of youngsters and their parents in the congregation. Either by oversight, or more likely by design, no one had seen fit to alter the day's set reading to suit the occasion.

In its weekly appraisal of a particular act of worship, this newspaper awards star ratings for sermon, music and

liturgy. Perhaps "usage" of scripture ought to be assigned a category of its own. Sometimes it is woefully inappropriate. After the cathedral service to which I have referred, the mother of one of the choristers expressed to me her dismay that such a slavish adherence to the lectionary had confronted her child with such a brutal biblical story.

Is it any wonder that her son is already having misgivings about religion in general, and the Bible in particular? At the age of 12 he is growing increasingly sceptical of the Church's claim that the Bible is the "Word of God".

If we want to hear God's word we need to be far more selective in our public reading of scripture, and far more willing to turn an ear elsewhere. The writings of past and present saints, novelists and poets are a neglected

source of inspiration as far as public worship is concerned. Similarly, although the excesses of Sheffield's Nine O'clock Service need to be avoided, the potential for art, music, dance and drama to convey something of God's message should not be overlooked. Among my own congregation, the contribution from a young people's mime group sometimes "speaks" more forcibly than reading an obscure passage from St Paul.

Midway through its much-heralded Decade of Evangelism, it is high time for the Church to use the Bible more in accordance with our contemporary understanding of just what sort of book it is. Its Creation stories, for example, have more in common with poetic insight than scientific fact. Similarly, the Bible is not necessarily an accurate historical guide. Its description

and interpretation of events are coloured by its theological presuppositions. The New Testament starts from the premise that Jesus is the Son of God, and the marvels attached to His birth, the miracles that characterise His ministry, and the mystery that surrounds His death and resurrection are all intended to impart life-giving faith in Him.

If the Bible as a whole is to impart such faith it needs to be read selectively, with intelligence and insight, rather than revered in a quasi-idolatrous fashion. In one church that I know, there is a circular stained-glass window depicting an open Bible highlighting the text: "The Word of the Lord endures for ever." I have no doubt that it does. However, it is a mistake to assume that the word is easily discerned on every page of scripture, or that it cannot be heard elsewhere.

Barry Overend is Vicar of St Chad's, Far Headingley, Leeds, and won The Times College of Preachers Preacher of the Year Award 1995.

THE TIMES

Put your preacher forward

READERS are invited to submit nominations or nominate themselves for The Times/College of Preachers Preacher of the Year Award 1996. The winner will be presented with a specially commissioned sculpture to be displayed in his or her church. Send the completed entry form below with a typed manuscript not exceeding 3,000 words to: The Preacher of the Year Award 1996, The College of Preachers, 81 North Road, Bourne, Lincs PE10 9BT (01778 422929), to arrive by March 31, 1996.



PREACHER OF THE YEAR NOMINATION FORM

Name of nominated preacher _____
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Chirac decides to scrap hated military call-up

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

FRANCE'S system of military conscription, which has furnished raw and often unwilling troops for the armed forces since the French Revolution in 1789, will be abolished during the next seven years in favour of a force made up of volunteers and professionals.

The plan, part of wide-ranging restructuring of the French armed forces, was disclosed yesterday by Pierre Messmer, the former Prime Minister, after a meeting last week with President Chirac.

Under the present law, all Frenchmen must perform ten months of military service, although many obtain long deferrals or work instead in developing countries and inner-city areas. Of the half million people who now make up the French armed forces, about 40 per cent are conscripts.

The President confirmed to me... that he has decided to abolish military service in its current form," M. Messmer, France's Prime Minister in the early 1970s and Defence Minister in the 1960s, told the Europe 1 radio station.

"The need to have large numbers of troops has declined sharply," he said. "It is inevitable that military service would disappear sooner or later."

Conscription remains deeply unpopular with French voters and recent opinion polls show that 85 per cent believe that France needs a professional army on the British or American model.

M. Chirac does not intend to abolish national service entirely, but plans to establish a new system allowing those who do not volunteer for military service to perform other types of civic service, M. Messmer said.

The President understands

Cancer doctor 'trapped'

Paris: Francois Mitterrand's doctor said yesterday that the late President had trapped him into lying about his cancer and promised to donate any profits from his banned book *Le Grand Secret* to charity. "In retrospect, I think Francois Mitterrand trapped me," Claude

that national service, of which military service is only one part, must not be scrapped," M. Messmer said.

During his election campaign, M. Chirac pledged to abolish conscription within ten years, but the move represents a gamble by the Gaullist President. Creating a new structure of national service to absorb those unwilling to join the armed forces is a huge and expensive undertaking at a time when the Government is desperately seeking to reduce the public deficit. However, the alternative — simply allowing those who would have been forced into uniform to drift on to the job market — is

equally unpalatable, given France's dire unemployment figures.

"Will the money and the political will be found to push this idea to its conclusion?" the weekly magazine *L'Evenement du Jeudi* asked.

Most of France's military bosses favour continuing conscription. Although only volunteers and professional units are sent on foreign missions, many fear that ending conscription will reduce France's military options while depriving thousands of youths of practical training and education opportunities.

Since the end of the Cold War, however, the system has been criticised as unnecessary and biased. Every year about 25,000 youths avoid military service. Some cite education or health reasons, while others opt to teach in the Third World or join the French auxiliary police.

According to critics, the majority of those who escape military service are from wealthy families which are able to pull strings on behalf of their sons.



President Mandela leads King Zwelithini to talks yesterday with the Zulu chiefs

Zulu king moves to end Natal killings

FROM INIGO CHILMORE IN JOHANNESBURG

PRESIDENT MANDELA yesterday announced that King Goodwill Zwelithini will convene a mass meeting of the Zulu nation within weeks in an attempt to stem the mounting violence which he said was turning KwaZulu/Natal into a ghost province.

"We must now concentrate all our energies to ensure that violence is stopped. I want to send a strong message of peace, that we cannot continue in this situation," Mr Mandela said after meeting the Zulu leader at his KwaKhangelanga Palace in the KwaZulu heartland. "Children cannot go to school, business is pulling out, it is becoming a ghost province."

The meeting between the President, the Zulu monarch and traditional chiefs was convened against a backdrop of 74 politically linked deaths in the province last month. Mr Mandela said the king would call an *imbizo* (traditional gathering) at which he would send a message of peace.

THE TIMES

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THE TIMES

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Animals at Pretoria Zoo drown

Johannesburg: More than 50 animals were drowned at Pretoria Zoo yesterday when a river burst its banks after nearly 200mm (8in) of rain fell in just two hours on the centre of the city in a thunderstorm, causing chaos (Inigo Gilmore writes).

Heavy rains swept away cars and caravans, submerged homes and damaged properties belonging to the British High Commission.

Many residents, bracing themselves for another downpour last night, believed the floods were the worst in the city's history. The weather bureau said that the previous highest one-day rainfall was 160mm in 1978.

Jacksons 'signed prenuptial deal'

New York: Legal experts speculating on the failed 20-month marriage of Michael Jackson and Lisa Marie Presley said that the unhappy couple must have signed the "mother of all prenuptial agreements" (Quentin Letts writes). Each had too much to lose, financially and in terms of reputation. Raoul Felder, a voluble Manhattan divorce lawyer, told the *New York Post* there was "no question" about it. "The marriage was predestined to fail, so the pre-nup had to have a belt, suspenders and an iron girdle."

Thai monks to carry ID cards

Bangkok: Buddhist monks will have to carry official identification cards similar to those held by ordinary Thai citizens after the murder of a British tourist, Johanne Masheder, 23. A monk who had concealed a rape conviction is in custody after confessing to her murder. (AP)

Argentina may ban Madonna over film

BY GABRIELLA GAMINI SOUTH AMERICA CORRESPONDENT

MADONNA may be banned from Argentina today for sully the name of the country's national heroine, Eva Peron, in a coming film.

Argentine protesters yesterday staged boisterous demonstrations in Buenos Aires against the pop singer and the film's British director, Alan Parker. The director was greeted by protesters burning Madonna dolls when he arrived in Buenos Aires to begin making his version of the hit Broadway musical, *Evita*.

Madonna, who is due to arrive today, will play the part of the legendary First Lady, who was seen as a champion of the poor and is still the centre of a personality cult in Argentina.

Argentines see as offensive the choice of the raunchy American star, known for her erotic stage antics, to play the revered champion of workers and the downtrodden. It has stirred up so much national sentiment that a deputy of the ruling Peronist party has tabled a motion in the Congress, which will vote today on whether to declare the director and the star *persona non grata*.

"It is an attack on our history, offensive to our dignity, an attack on Peronists, a humiliating lie," said the deputy, Marta Rivas, before presenting a resolution in the Congress. She called on the thousands of Argentines who have lined up this week to audition for roles as extras in the film not to "prostitute themselves for \$30 a day".

Graffiti have been sprayed on billboards lining the airport road to the capital, saying: "Viva Evita! Out With Madonna". More protests are expected to mark her arrival.

Leading article, page 21

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French collaborators' regime in the dock as former Cabinet minister faces Holocaust show trial

Lawyer fights Vichy war

GÉRARD BOULANGER is fighting France's last battle of the Second World War.

For 15 years, the extrovert Bordeaux barrister has been on the trail of Maurice Papon, a former official in the collaborationist Vichy regime, who is alleged to have been responsible for the deportation of 1,690 Jews from the Bordeaux area, including more than 200 children, between 1942 and 1944. Only a handful survived the Nazi concentration camps.

M Papon went on to become the Paris police chief in 1958, an MP, a Cabinet minister under President Giscard d'Estaing and holder of the coveted Légion d'honneur. He is now 85, the last surviving senior Vichy official suspected of complicity in the Holocaust.

In 1983 Maitre Boulanger first filed suit against M Papon, on behalf of 26 de-

BORDEAUX FILE

by BEN
MACINTYRE



camp survivors and their relatives, for "crimes against humanity".

The case moved agonisingly slowly and many believed that the ageing bureaucrat would die before a trial could take place. In September 1994, President Mitterrand, himself a former Vichy official, admitted that he had deliberately put the brakes on legal action against M Papon in the interests of preserving "civil peace".

However, M Papon has outlived his protectors, and after the election of Jacques Chirac last year the wheels

suddenly began to turn at speed. The Bordeaux prosecutor-general has now completed a 182-page indictment of M Papon, alleging that as secretary-general of the Gironde region in 1942, with responsibility for "Jewish affairs", he played an active role in rounding up Jews.

In March a panel of judges will decide formal charges, paving the way for a show trial that Maitre Boulanger insists is more than 50 years overdue.

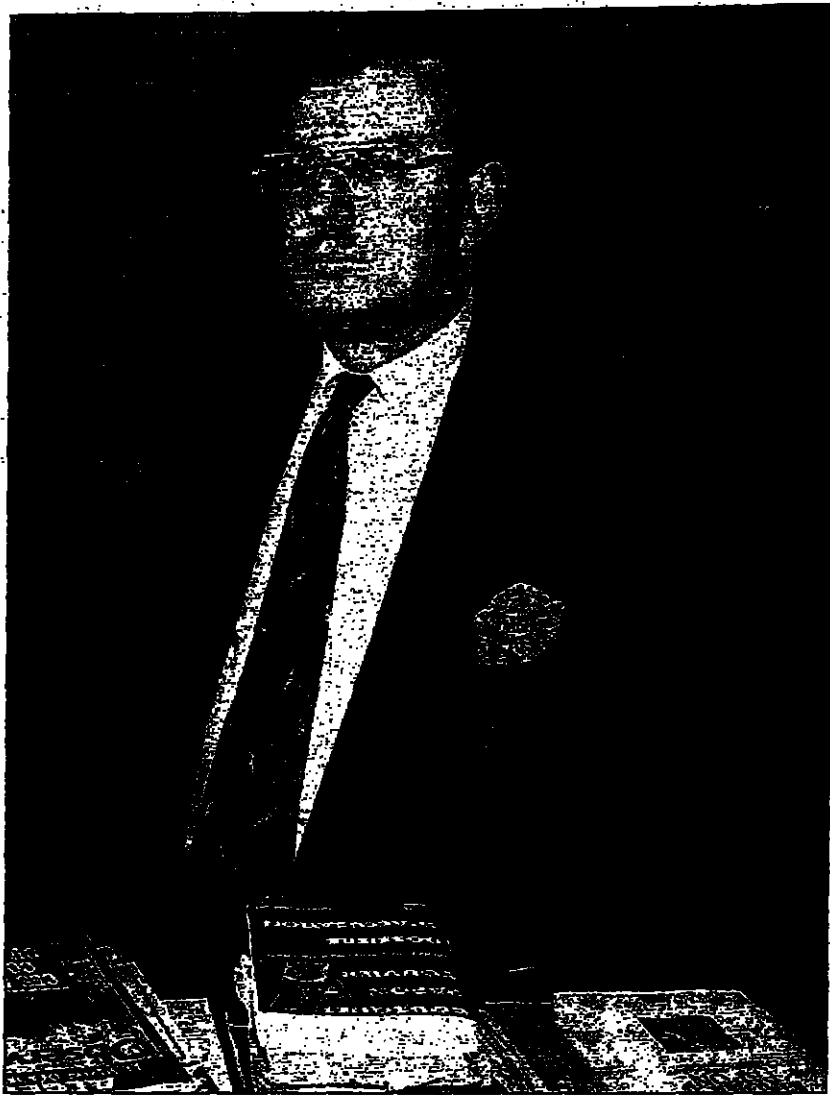
"It is not just Papon who will go on trial, but the entire Vichy Government," the law-

yer said last week. "He can't get away now," he added, opening a cabinet to reveal 50,000 neatly filed documents, the fruits of a historical manhunt that has become a personal obsession.

In 1994 Maitre Boulanger published a blistering biography entitled *Maurice Papon: A French Technocrat During the Collaboration*. M Papon promptly sued his nemesis for defamation but a court ruled, to the lawyer's delight, that no verdict could be given on the case until M Papon had himself been tried.

For Maitre Boulanger, M Papon represents the Vichy civil servant "par excellence", efficient, ambitious and unquestioning. "He was more interested in the State than the Republic... we are talking not about anti-Semitism by ideology, but anti-Semitism through indifference," he said.

M Papon's bureaucratic talents were reflected in his meteoric career after the war, but his meticulousness also proved his undoing. He never misfiled a memo, and in 1981 a cache of documents dating from the Vichy years and written in his spidery hand was discovered in a Bordeaux attic. A scandal erupted. M Papon retired from politics, and Maitre Boulanger found his mission.



Gérard Boulanger, who has been on the trail of Maurice Papon for 15 years

Time called for claret diplomacy

THE United States consulate in Bordeaux, America's oldest diplomatic outpost, will close its doors for ever this month, a victim of federal budget cuts and the changing palates of US wine buffs.

The consulate was opened in 1790, the year after the French Revolution, with the appointment as Consul-General of Joseph Fenwick, an American wine merchant who had lived in the great French port for many years.

The economic contacts between Bordeaux and the fledgling American republic were crucial, to both countries: from here the Marquis de Lafayette had set sail to join George Washington and many of the provisions for the American troops were exported through Bordeaux.

But over the years the links, and in particular America's taste for the great wines of Bordeaux, have slowly diminished in importance. Britain remains the second-largest importer of Bordeaux wines (after Belgium) while the United States has dropped to sixth place. American consumption of French wine reached a peak in the mid-1980s, but has since tailed off as the taste for domestic wines has grown.

At the American consulate this week, a magnificent edifice in the heart of Bordeaux, staff were sadly packing up the Stars and Stripes and rinsing out the wine glasses as a vintage diplomatic relationship was finally put into storage.

Chocolate with bitter message

SOME of the worst of last month's industrial unrest took place in Bordeaux, where Alain Juppé, the Prime Minister, is Mayor. Returning to his mayoral fiefdom at the height of the strikes, M Juppé had the unwelcome experience of seeing himself burnt in effigy by a crowd of angry demonstrators.

Now, however, "Antoine", the most famous chocolatier in a city renowned for its bonbons, has come up with a special chocolate in

honour of the Mayor, christened "La Juppette". M Juppé, desperate to prove he has a sense of humour, was only too happy to lend his name to the delicacy. But the compliment is back-handed, since the "Juppettes" (which also means mini-skirts) was the nickname given to the 12 female ministers in his first Cabinet — most of whom were sacked last November, provoking outrage among feminists and further damaging his popularity.

Germany honours dead of Auschwitz

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

PRESIDENT HERZOG yesterday urged his fellow Germans to remember the lessons of Auschwitz and to stamp out racist attitudes among the younger generation. His speech was intended to commemorate the liberation of the concentration camp, which has been declared a national day of memorial, but it took on a contemporary resonance yesterday after the fire that destroyed a foreigners' hostel in Lübeck.

His words took up the call of President Weizman of Israel, who earlier this week warned the Germans to be on their guard against neo-Nazis.

"The most important thing is to sharpen the focus of the young generation, so that they are better able to identify racism and totalitarianism in its early stages," he said. "In the battle against this fundamental evil of the twentieth century, it is absolutely critical to mount a timely resistance."

After his speech, Herr Herzog was handed the so-called Death Books, which record the names and numbers of tens of thousands of victims of Auschwitz. The ceremony capped years of searching for documentation from the camp. Largely funded by the Germans, academic researchers have trawled KGB archives and



Herzog examining the Death Books yesterday

Lübeck youths freed

BY ROGER BOYES

THREE youths held in connection with the fire that killed at least ten people at a foreigners' hostel in Lübeck were released without charge yesterday.

German police said that the case was still wide open, adding: "We cannot rule out politically motivated arson but neither can we exclude a technical failure."

They were also unable to enter the shell of the building to gather evidence, as the house is still too hot and there is a danger of collapse. Firefighters on ladders probed with long poles through the upper floor's charred win-

used computer techniques to collate many sources, such as the report on extraction of gold teeth from corpses, the penalty register, the roll and death certificates, in order to publish volumes listing the names of 69,000 victims.

That is still only a fraction of the total death toll. More than 400,000 people were registered as camp inmates and about half of them died. More than one million Jews deport-

ed from Nazi-occupied countries of Europe were never registered by name, alive or dead. In the adjacent camp of Birkenau they were immediately selected at the train ramp for the gas chambers. But, as the publisher Dr Klaus Gerhard Saur points out, the mere printing of the names represents a landmark.

"In many cases it is the first time that these people's names have been published — they have lost their anonymity." The books, which Dr Saur believes will be bought mainly by libraries, are also a solid response to far-right revisionist historians who claim that the numbers of those killed in the Holocaust have been exaggerated or manipulated.

Only a few of the Death Books have survived. Their mere existence was testimony to the blinkered thoroughness of the SS administration, which wanted a precise record of fatalities, and to its deceit, since the cause of death was almost always faked. The volume of paperwork at Auschwitz was enormous. The sick-bay office produced eight copies of the initial death report, the camp headquarters issued four copies containing personal data, the doctors produced four copies of a concise medical history, four copies of a medical affidavit were also issued, as was a single death certificate. If death was not from "natural causes", the documentation had to be supplemented by six copies of a post-mortem report and six copies of a forensic autopsy protocol.

Tadeusz Paczuska, a former inmate working as a clerk, remembers that the camp administration often had to document 600 dead every day. Much of the documentation was destroyed by the SS during the evacuation of the camp in January 1945. Most of the surviving Death Books have been kept in Moscow. The books are published in German, English and Polish. (*Death Books from Auschwitz*, Vols 1-3, Saur Verlag, Munich).

Bosnia factions meet new deadline

FROM REUTERS
IN SARAJEVO

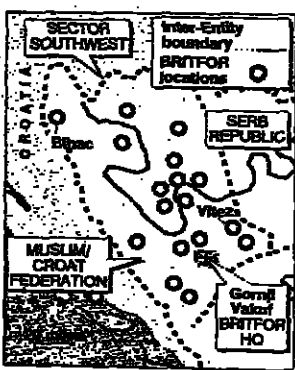
THE FORMER warring sides in Bosnia were obeying a deadline to pull back from ceasefire positions yesterday, meeting a key requirement of the peace agreement reached in Dayton, Ohio.

General Martin Walker, commander of Nato's peace-keeping ground forces, inspected frontline bunkers in Sarajevo that had been abandoned well before the midnight (GMT) London time deadline. "This is a microcosm of what is happening all along the confrontation line," he said.

The Bosnia-Herzegovina Peace Accord laid down that Bosnian government, Serb and Croat forces should withdraw two kilometres from either side of the frontline by January 19. A Nato spokesman, Simon Haselock, said: "We won't have a final answer for a day or two but we expect to find the parties in substantial compliance on the issue of the pullback."

Some 50 heavy weapons were still inside what will become a 1,000km (625 mile) long separation zone, but Nato appeared unfazed. "It's a planned and phased withdrawal," a source said. "They have until midnight tonight."

Verification by Nato ground and air forces will be completed today. The alliance also expected to see the sides exchange some prisoners of war by the deadline.



The region being policed by Britain

Cutbacks shrink Galleries Lafayette

FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

THE TOP Paris department store, Galleries Lafayette, a French institution since 1912, has become the latest casualty of the capital's *annus horribilis* of bomb scares, strikes and demonstrations.

A disastrous last quarter has forced the chain, the French equivalent of Harrods, to announce the closure of five stores — in Lyons, Valence, Avignon, Nevers and Dreux. It will lay off 1,000 employees, 150 in Paris. The flagship store in the capital stays open.

The strike has taken an enormous toll: businesses are believed to have lost more than Fr20 billion (£2.6 billion) and 100,000 jobs while department stores alone suffered estimated losses of

Fr480 million. In the summer, the crowds that surge under the blue-and-gold dome of Galleries Lafayette's stained glass Art Nouveau ceiling dwindled as thousands stayed away, fearing a city that had become the target of militant Islamic bombers.

Despite late-night and Sunday openings in an attempt to recuperate losses, the store's elegant and perfumed halls were almost empty in the crucial Christmas run-up. The centre was paralysed by demonstrations and traffic gridlock because of the capital's worst transport strike in almost 30 years. Even the weather did not help: an Indian summer meant autumn sales of winter clothing made a slow start.

The troubled chain is already in Fr2.7 billion debt, due largely to its 1991 takeover of Nouvelles Galeries. Financial problems were compounded when a campaign to become an international retailing powerhouse proved a fiasco. Its US store, in Trump Tower on New York's Fifth Avenue, was forced to shut in 1994, having lost Fr232 million in four years.

The chain reported Fr282 million losses in the first six-month period of last year and is expected to finish the year in the red. Planned company restructuring, announced in June by the president, Georges Meyer, has been brought forward and is more severe than predicted.

Strikes aside, many retail

experts believe department stores are becoming outdated and will have to change to survive in the hypermarket age. Disgruntled employees in provincial Galleries Lafayette branches point to marketing errors, such as overpriced merchandise, as another reason for the problems. "The concept of the big store is losing ground throughout Europe, even if chains like Marks & Spencer are managing to acquit themselves well," one French retail analyst said in yesterday's *Libération*.

In contrast, Marks & Spencer is enjoying such huge success that it recently opened three stores in greater Paris. It plans one in Bordeaux and another in a Paris suburb.

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■ OPINION

Thank heaven for amateurs: the professionals may be in turmoil but the bands will play on



■ FESTIVAL

They are geared up for culture as well: Atlanta prepares an Olympian feast of the arts

THE TIMES
ARTS

■ VIDEOS

First Knight and other new video and CD releases, reviewed in Weekend, page 14



■ ON MONDAY

Reviews of Andrew Davis conducting Charles Ives, plus ENO's Magic Flute and Björk on tour

Look at the broader picture! That's easy to say but hard to do. I was guilty of wearing blinkers three weeks ago when I looked back at the 1995 arts scene. My grandiose summary was flawed, I now realise, in two respects. First, I ignored something that accounts for 95 per cent of all cultural activity. Whoops. Secondly, I didn't even realise that I was doing it.

Luckily — or to put it another way, unluckily — several irritatingly clever readers wrote, with ill-mannered grace, to point out my deficiencies. Thanks, chaps. In the final words of John Osborne's *The Entertainer*: "Let me know where you're working tomorrow night — and I'll come and see you."

What had I ignored? Only one awesomely evocative word: amateurs. I had overlooked Britain's choirs, thousands of them. Its tartan army of Scottish reeders. Its closest watercolourists and its puffing euphoniumists. Its teenage would-be Blurs, and its busy

Remember it's all about having fun

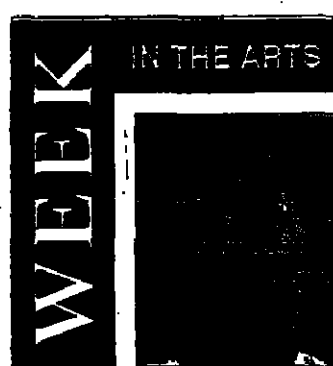
soubrenes vying to be Yum-Yum in the local *Mikado*. Its model-makers, ballroom dancers, campenologists, origamists, village-hall thespians, karaoke champions, barbershoppers, potters, poets...

How could I have forgotten this huge hinterland of do-it-yourself culture? I can only plead that I was not alone. Think back to the uproar created by the arts lobby when a £5 million cut in the Arts Council grant was announced. "A killer-blow to cultural life," said one commentator, and the rest mostly nodded agreement. Well, it was bad news for people who earn their living in the subsidised arts, but that is not quite the same thing. The vast majority of Britain's performers — the amateurs — carried on as before.

"Ah, but they are not the people who provide the quality," say the

professional lobbyists. "We need our Covent Gardens, the beacons of excellence." If I had a million quid for every time this argument had appeared over the past fortnight I could almost pay Pavarotti's pasta bill by myself.

Let us overlook the uncomfortable truth that highly subsidised "beacons of excellence" sometimes produce pretty shoddy shows, and the happier truth that there is excellence among amateurs: too great brass bands, stirring choral societies, astonishing youth orchestras, audacious student drama companies. Let us accept that this "beacons of excellence" contention is true. Even so, there is a counter-argument which says that participation in art will always be more rewarding than observation. To adapt the charity slogan: buy a man an opera ticket and you



WEEK IN THE ARTS

RICHARD MORRISON

amuse him for an evening (if you are lucky); teach him to sing and you inspire him for life.

That needs to be said again and again, because so much of what

passes for cultural life is geared towards brainwashing the public into accepting a role as passive consumers. The film, TV and music businesses employ armies of propagandists for that purpose. But then, they have a living to make. More worrying is the craven attitude of governments, heritage ministers, arts councils: they seem not to question the notion that, for most people, the arts should be something you watch, not do.

Arts journalists are equally guilty: we devote much space to discussion of the finest details of professional artistic life, yet often ignore changes in the amateur or educational world that affect millions. We miss the broader picture.

All this contributes to the coars-

ening of cultural awareness. If you play an instrument you empathise far more fully with the furious instrumental drama of, say, a Mahler symphony than if you have no notion of what heroic efforts are involved. If you have hammed through *An Inspector Calls* in a village hall, then you really appreciate Daldry's sophisticated production. One great advantage of a thriving amateur arts scene could be to create a large, supportive and knowledgeable audience for the professionals. But that's not likely to happen while many professionals appear to despise amateurs.

There are difficulties in the amateur world. Some superb brass bands have been disrupted by the demise of heavy-industry communities. Choral singing has all but collapsed in its traditional

strongholds: church and school. On the other hand, the last decade has seen the emergence of what is virtually a new art-form, though it has its roots in medieval mystery-plays: "community" projects that involve both professionals and amateurs. Such initiatives build a bridge of goodwill over the great divide. And goodwill is what has been notably lacking in the public's response to the "arts funding crisis".

There is one other gift that amateurs can bring. It's called enjoyment. Remember that? It's what music-making, acting or painting is supposed to be all about, give or take the odd profound subtext. The professional world seems to have forgotten, so relentless is the grind to safeguard subsidies or market the next show. Amateurs remind us that art is fun, not a grim war of attrition. That, surely, is the broader picture. I am sorry that I missed it the first time. We got there in the end.

Ringing a loud Southern bell

As the world's athletes await the Olympic Games in Atlanta later this year, the host city is preparing to win some gold medals of its own. During the two-month Olympic Arts Festival which begins on June 1, the "capital of the South" intends to reshape the image of city, state and region. According to Jeff Babcock, the director of the Cultural Olympiad, which has been running for the past four years, "it is an important platform to present and explain Southern culture in 1996".

If this sounds a bit pushy, this adopted Southerner does not deny it. The South in general, and Atlanta in particular, is eager to slough off the impression of good ol' boys, however misguided that may be, and plant instead the seeds of a more vigorous future.

The festival will feature more than 200 performances at 30 venues from, inter alia, 14 theatre companies and 12 dance groups. Among the British representatives are the Royal National Theatre and

Atlanta is using the Olympic stage to mount a cultural revival in the South, says Michael Henderson

the Leeds-based Phoenix Dance Company. In addition, there are 25 exhibitions, many seeking to explain Southern history and culture to the outside world — and, one feels, to the South itself.

To European eyes some of it — the bluegrass festival, for instance — may appear a provincial knees-up. But it would be muddle-headed to underestimate the enthusiasm of the team led by Babcock, whose extensive experience in music and arts administration includes co-founding the New World Symphony Orchestra with the conductor Michael Tilson Thomas.

The South is still stereotyped, even in the South itself

"We are approaching the end of the 20th century," he says, "and one of the ways in which the South suffers is that it is still stereotyped within our own country and even, in some ways, within the South itself. As one who has come here from working in other parts of the country, I was not aware of what an extraordinary part of America it is."

"Southern culture is the most diverse and perhaps the most multifaceted part of America. This is the birthplace of American music and that is the greatest American export. This area is very rich and fascinating with

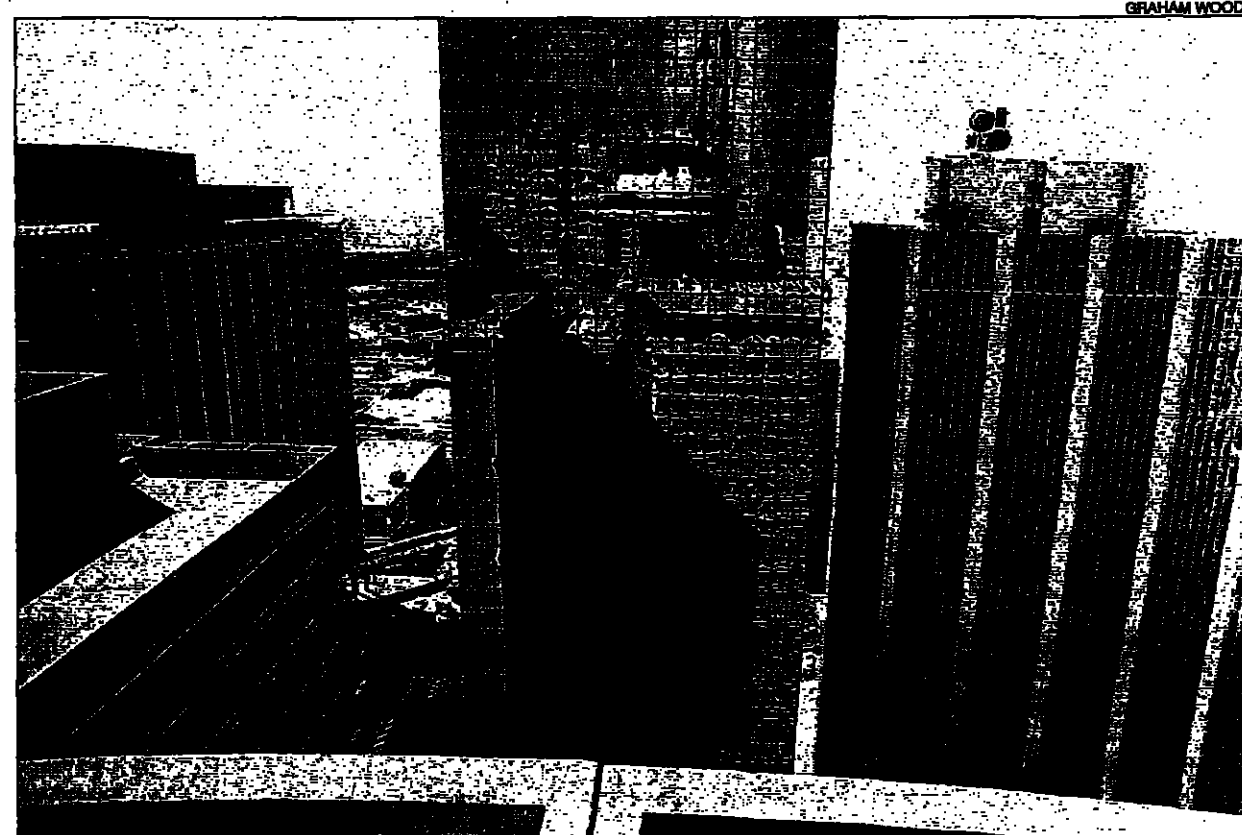
its collisions of cultures." They are not thinking small. Last year nine Nobel literature laureates, including Derek Walcott and Joseph Brodsky, gathered in Atlanta for a week of readings and discussions. Over the past year there has been a film programme to mark 100 years of cinema.

There is an impressive civic home for the city's arts groups, the Woodruff Centre, where the Atlanta Symphony (which will play six concerts as part of the festival, two of them with Jessye Norman, a native of Augusta) is developing an excellent reputation. The centre, roughly comparable with London's Barbican, also houses the Alliance Theatre Company.

In the words of its music director, Yoel Levi, the ASO is "the hottest orchestra in America" and, once the usual allowances have been made for local pride, it is undeniably a band that is making a healthy reputation.

"It is not often in life that you have the chance to do something important like this," Levi says. In a city where Shostakovich is still something of a novelty, his point is well made.

As for British involvement, Tony Cragg, the German-based sculptor, is responsible for the festival's most obvious landmark, a 25ft high work



Georgia on our minds: Atlanta will host the Olympic Arts Festival, an attempt to redefine the image of the South

resembling an athlete with a ball, constructed from 130 aluminium, doll-like "puppets". Cragg calls it "a work with figurative on the theme of a world united, a global event".

Atlantans have got used to the gibes of their countrymen. "People have talked about the 'Bubba Games'," Babcock says. ("Bubba" is a mild American insult, like "bumpkin" in England.) "Atlanta is a centre for telecommunications, businesses are relocating here and it is an exciting place to be right now. Yet the

idea that it is a backwater is still in the back of people's minds.

"People here have a great sense of place and there is a good deal more to them than meets the eye. There is a sense of where people have come from and it is an important part of our mission to show the best of the region to the world.

"The festival is a quilt of many colours. The aim is not to make dollars but to rethink the long-term strategy for the arts in Atlanta and to position ourselves for the next ten years."

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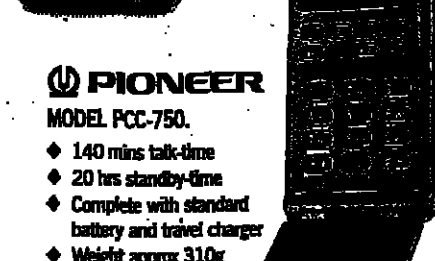
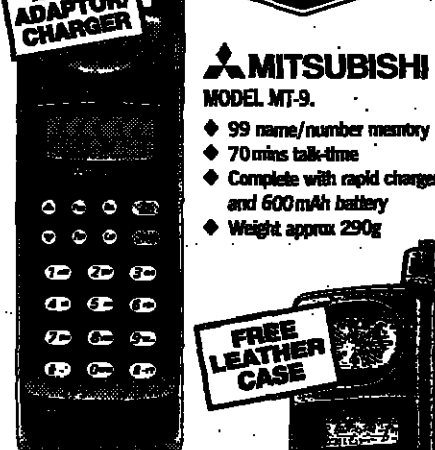
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British quarantine laws are obsolete, cruel and hypocritical: by defending them, the Government is serving only the kennel lobby

Englishmen and mad dogs

Simon Jenkins

Let us suppose that all travellers arriving in Britain from abroad are required to spend six months in a quarantine hostel for fear of leprosy. Their port of departure does not matter, nor their vaccination record, state of health or length of stay. On Government orders, they are kept in isolation and allowed no outside doctors. The hostel is not inspected and friends can only push food through the bars.

Point out to the Government that there are no lepers in Britain any more and a minister will boast that the policy is clearly working. Mention that no other country inflicts this cruelty on visitors and he replies: more fool them. Mention vaccination and he shakes his head: better safe than sorry.

I am not a dog fanatic. There is a small and endearing member of the species in my house but on the whole I regard city dogs as pests. They foul parks, frighten children and wreck conversation. Dogs have their role in nature's noble drama, but it is best played out in the countryside. I am told that philosophers have accorded dogs "rights". If so, they must find other exponents than myself.

But dog owners do have rights. One of them is to take their property across national boundaries when this does no harm to others. Britain's Victorian rabies laws prevent frequent travellers from carrying their pets with them.

If pets are taken, they must go into quarantine in a Government-approved kennel on their return. Quarantine costs some £1,500 per animal for the requisite six months.

Over the past 20 years not one genuine (rather than vaccine-induced) case of rabies has been detected in quarantine. The cost in physical and psychological damage to the dogs and cats is known only to them and their owners. The cost in grief is incalculable — although I am sure some tort lawyer would make a guess. The cost to the tourist trade in refusing to allow continental travellers to bring pets to Britain on holiday must be huge. The policy is illiberal and obsolete. How does it survive?

The answer is that it has its beneficiaries. Over the past 20 years I calculate that the 79 Government-licensed quarantine kennels have taken in some £200 million, a figure that is growing with increased family mobility. Half these kennels are members of the Quarantine Kennel Owners' Association. This describes itself as "the better end of the market". Of the worse end we know little, since the ministry protects kennels from public scrutiny. The quarantine

reform lobby, Passports for Pets, has bulging files on malnutrition, solitary confinement, tiny cages, concrete floors, worn paws and throats wrecked by agonised barking. The freedom of these kennels from inspection is extraordinary, given Whitehall's paranoia about the treatment of farm animals. The RSPCA is also barred by law from access. Owners' vets have no declared right to examine their pets.

While no cats or dogs contract rabies in quarantine, some 150 a year die there. In a recent case, the first an owner knew of a death was a box of ashes through the post. Many owners feel their animals die of separation and neglect as much as maltreatment. For a dog, quarantine is jail without reason. For owners, enduring the trauma of returning home from a foreign posting, the separation can seem no less cruel. The columns of army newspapers are filled with the tribulations of service family pets.

The quarantine rules are not only cruel to animals and individuals, they are hypocritical. Because they are so draconian, thousands of pets are smuggled into Britain without detection, with no resulting check on vaccination. Needless to say,

this massive avoidance has led to no increase in rabies in Britain. But then there is no rabies in Portugal, Spain, Belgium, The Netherlands, Denmark or the rest of Scandinavia. The disease has all but vanished in France. Sylvan rabies (detected in some German foxes) does not communicate to human beings. Denmark, which has no border with Germany, does not live in mortal terror of rabid migrants. Germans do not walk their streets, or even their woods, in gaiters for fear of being bitten. There are no rabid human beings, presumably the object of this concern, anywhere on the Continent. The last recorded death was in France in 1928. The scare is absurd.

The Government knows this. It waives the rules for Defence Ministry guard-dogs, yet it refuses to do

so for guide-dogs for the blind. The policy thus imprisons thousands of blind people in Britain for their holidays. Last year the Government abandoned quarantine altogether for traded cats and dogs. The reason was that Brussels, home of the protection racket, had at least rumpled this one. The quarantine laws were disallowed for animal traders under the single market. The best hope for animal libertarians is yet more European harmonisation.

Agriculture ministers are famously tetchy on this topic. When a politician knows he is doing something wrong, he murmurs "politics". Yet there is no politics here. The non-partisan Commons Select Committee on Rabies in 1994 concluded in favour of abandoning quarantine at least within Europe. Vaccination is adequate. Nor is there any great opposition from the media, so feared by John Major's entourage. The Tory press (including the *Telegraph*, *Mail on Sunday* and *Sunday Express*) regularly campaign for repeal.

The truth lies elsewhere. It was contained in the remarks of the then Agriculture Minister, Gillian Shephard, to the select committee

in July 1994. Pressed time and again on quarantine by baffled Members of Parliament, she preserved the ministry *omerté* towards the kennel owners and referred only to her "veterinary advisers". Her advice, she said, was that Britain was "not ready". When I hear the such advice, I hear £200 million talking.

Year after year the ministry plays along. It displays posters of rabid dogs at Channel ports and even canal docks. To say that other diseases more deserve public attention is understatement. In the dog department, pit bulls and rottweilers are a greater menace. So are poison adders. Yet the Government has no adder eradication policy, presumably because there is no adder-farm owners association.

The rabies laws are Britain at its most insular and government at its most timid. The 1994 select committee advised a switch in vaccination and tagging for the movement of pets within Europe and between other rabies-free countries. Vaccination is the practice in other European countries, allied to a microchip passport implanted

under the skin. The Government response was again that it was "not ready". Kennel lobbyists make much of the ease of evasion, but there is no incentive to evasion that could equal six months' quarantine. Any obstructionist can find problems. Only the British Civil Service is allegedly flummoxed.

Governments demonstrate their competence in small things as well as big. The official portrayal of the risk of rabies is so distorted as to constitute a lie. Ministers know vaccination works and would leave British dog owners and public as safe as they are now, and appreciably more free. Yet a change would mean confronting a lobby with profits and a good scare story at its disposal, a story that ministers have long propagated. Ministers would rather not do this, so the lie is disseminated. The nation's ports are daubed with signs suggesting that the medieval alleys of Calais and Ostend are alive with foaming dogs, frantic to devastate the pure homesteads of Merrie England.

The last time the Ministry of Agriculture tangled with this sort of statistical terrorism was over BSE in cattle. Then the boot was on the other foot. It accused its critics of alarmism and exaggeration, of declaring a public health risk where none existed. We were all told to examine the evidence and look at the facts. We were told to grow up.

Physician heal thyself.

Why we need a change of heart on divorce law

Lord Mackay's Family Law Bill must be made tougher to help to preserve marriage, says Basil Hume

Nervousness over the Government's divorce law proposals stems from a deep and growing anxiety about the fragile state of family life. We each have a stake in the long-term objective of preventing marital relationships from disintegrating at the alarming rate they do now. It is a moral, social and political project of immense proportions.

There is an urgent need to rediscover a shared acceptance of certain unchanging and basic norms governing human behaviour. It is not so much that there has been a sudden outbreak of evil, but rather that the clear signposts which we all need to guide us in living out any human commitment seem to have faded. This is why, in the Roman Catholic bishops' statement on the Family Law Bill in November, we proclaimed the moral and spiritual basis of marriage:

We firmly believe and teach that marriage is absolutely essential to the wellbeing of society. It is a contract or covenant by which a man and a woman freely consent to live with each other "for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death do us part".

It follows that the Roman Catholic Church is opposed to divorce, whereby the civil authority attempts to break this irrevocable covenant and allows another marriage. But the Church recognises that divorce may, in certain circumstances, have to be tolerated if it is the only way of safeguarding the legal rights of the spouses and the children, or the division of property.

"The question is, what divorce legislation will cause the least harm? This is a difficult and complex area, and it would be wrong for anyone — bishop or layperson — to argue that Catholics are, as a matter of conscience, obliged to make a particular prudential judgement for or against

the details of the current Bill. On a previous occasion I have said that personally I would support the Lord Chancellor's Bill, if this were to result in reducing acrimony and conflict when the parties are determined to seek divorce, and if it were to end the so-called "quickie" divorce. Since then, having followed the debate closely and reflected further, I have concluded that there are areas where the Bill needs to be strengthened.

There is a salutary lesson to be learnt from earlier legislation in this area, about how easy it is for the legislators to fail to foresee the actual effect of the provisions they enact. The 1969 Divorce Act contains cautionary examples of how clauses intended to restrict access to divorce have, in fact, led to divorce on demand. In trying to assess the likely effects of the current Bill, it is important to be clear about the present law under which civil marriage has already become *de facto* a temporary union. Since 1969, it has become common for those seeking a divorce, especially where children are involved, not to rely on two (or five years) separation as proof of "irretrievable breakdown", but instead to use one of the so-called "fault" clauses by claiming adultery or unreasonable behaviour. Around 75 per cent of divorce petitions cite one of these "fault" clauses, often because it is possible to obtain a divorce much more quickly by alleging fault than by waiting for a period of separation to pass. Most divorces take less than one year.

I would imagine that most marital relationships are likely to undergo a degree of stress induced by faults and failings, and those which manage to endure no doubt do so in part because ways of coping, and even growing through these, are developed. But when a divorce takes place, whatever faults there may be on either or both sides are symptoms or causes of what is

fundamentally wrong: the breakdown of the marriage.

It is, however, widely argued that by excluding "fault" the current proposals will, for the first time, allow unilateral access to divorce by either partner without any objective proof of breakdown and so turn marriage into a provisional contract. It is further argued that the presence of a "fault" clause has a symbolic effect in underlining the wrongness of attempting to break the marriage contract, and that a "no-fault" divorce law sends a moral message that marriage is a temporary relationship which exists principally for the fulfilment of the individual spouses. The merits of these important points will, I trust, be considered by Parliament. At the same time, other considerations are also relevant.

In civil law, marriage is already a temporary contract which can be broken by the unilateral decision of one partner sustained over a period of time. The new proposals will not alter that. Moreover, even when the "fault" clauses are used at present, it is sufficient for an allegation to be made — it does not have to be proved. Now the Church's teaching is that a valid marriage contract cannot be broken. From a moral point of view the marriage vows continue to bind, whatever the State may say or decree. From a legal point of view it is difficult to see what more objective proof of marital breakdown there could be other than the sustained determination of one or both partners to end it, evidenced for instance by a period of separation.

It is arguable, therefore, that the practical effect of the "fault" clauses in the present law is more symbolic than real. In any case, it is necessary to find effective ways of underlining the seriousness of the marriage contract in legislation.

One obvious possibility would be to lengthen the so-called waiting

period. The Bill, as I understand it, proposes that either or both parties should be able to apply for a divorce order after a 12-month period for reflection, provided they declare that the marriage has irretrievably broken down and that they have settled all property and custody matters. Here, again, there are a number of factors to be considered, not least the effect of prolonged uncertainty on children. But I do wonder whether a period as short as a year is sufficient to establish that a marriage has irretrievably broken down.

Secondly, there is also the question of what happens during this "period for reflection and consideration", as the Bill describes it. The purpose of this period is more than to prepare for divorce: it is to reflect on whether the marriage can be saved. It is therefore essential that sufficient resources are provided for marriage counselling so that at every stage in the process there are ample opportunities for couples to explore whether their marriage is salvageable. Mediation in many cases will no doubt prove to be the least painful way for couples to negotiate what is always a tragic and difficult route to a divorce settlement. But quite apart from mediation, it is essential that more explicit recognition is given in the

Bill to the important role marriage counselling can play in exploring the possibility of reconciliation.

A third way to bolster the Bill might be to strengthen the so-called hardship bar. This provision, which exists in the present law, bars divorce where dissolution of the marriage would lead to grave financial or other hardship. No one should simply be able to walk away from the legal obligations of a wrecked marriage without first agreeing to adequate and fair terms. Moreover, if one party does not want to divorce, and sees themselves as the innocent party, it is extremely important that they should not be penalised. To this extent at least, it is essential that immoral or unjust conduct should be taken into account.

These, then, are some of the concerns I have about the Bill as presently drafted. But any necessary reform of the divorce law can only be part of a larger project of strengthening the institution of marriage and family life.

One urgent need is for better marriage preparation to be available to all. I am often struck by the thought that a monk has to wait five years before being allowed to take solemn vows. Monastic vows

are no more solemn than the vows of marriage. And monks do not have the grave responsibility of bringing new life into the world and nurturing young children. We are spending too much money and energy focusing on the ending of marriages, when what is needed is more investment on preparing for marriage and sustaining couples, especially in the early years. Maybe we should make entry into marriage more difficult. In this way we might rediscover a stronger sense of the sacredness and seriousness of the marriage bond.

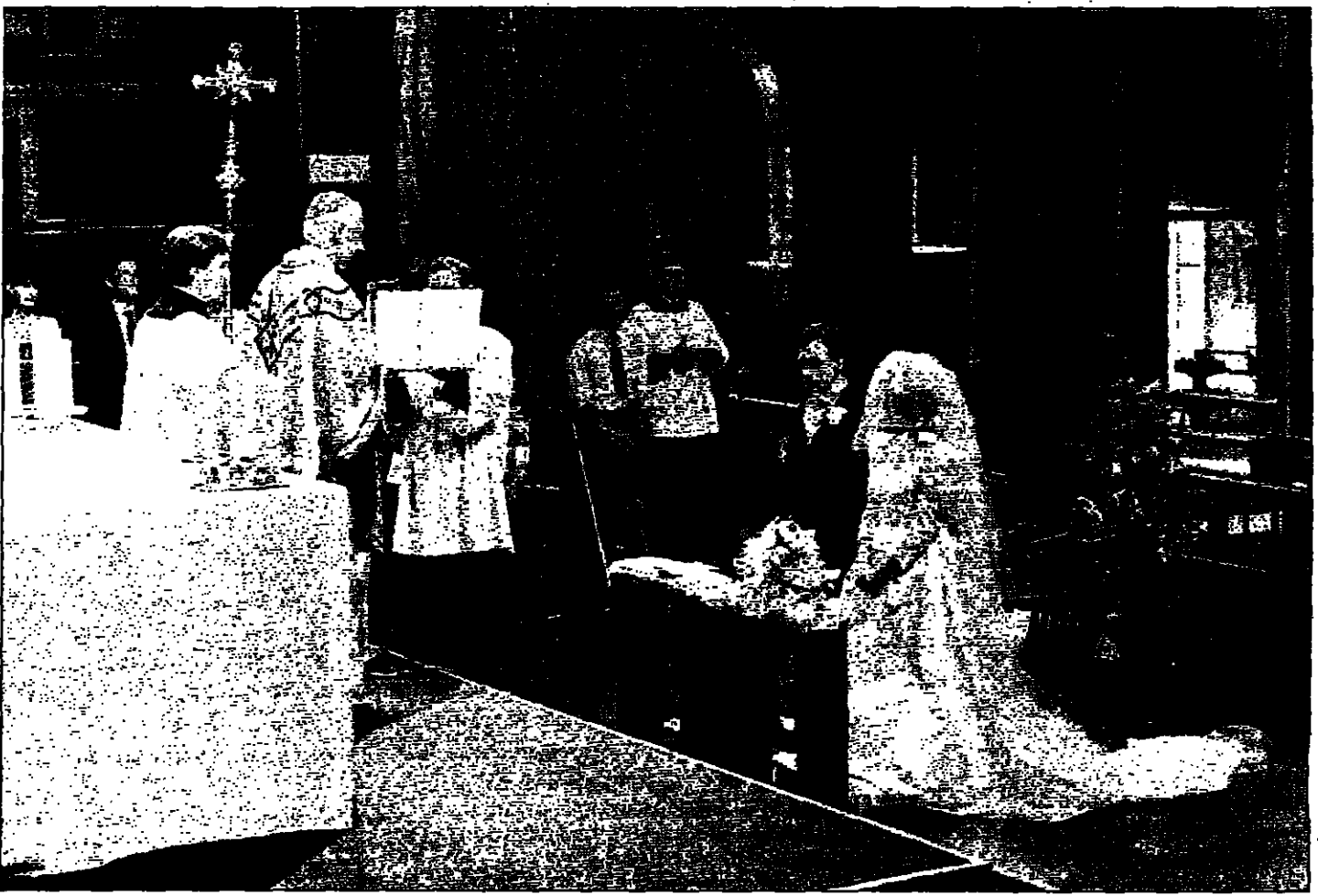
In saying this I do not ignore the rise in cohabitation, which is a widespread social trend. But the answer is to make marriage more attractive by doing all we can to ensure more marriages flourish. As well as doing more to prepare people for marriage, far more resources than the present £3 million should be given to marriage counselling services and other similar organisations. Furthermore, a comprehensive family policy is needed to ensure that a range of government policies, including employment, housing and the tax and benefit system become more helpful to families.

The Church has an important role too, both in marriage preparation and support for existing mar-

riages. Nor must we forget that the Church's role always includes the care and support of those who have suffered the pain of separation and divorce, whether it is their fault or not. Bishops and priests should remind them that the fact of being divorced does not debar a person from the sacraments. Remarriage by the divorced does not then compromise the Church's teaching, show understanding and compassion, emphasising that they remain members of the Church.

God created each one of us in His own image and likeness. He called us into existence through love, and He calls us at the same time to love. One way of fulfilling that vocation is marriage. If our society is to recover a healthier family life, it requires us to become more aware of the extraordinary potential for human fulfilment within marriages which, although they may not be perfect, are nonetheless good enough. There is a clear need to bring about a change in people's attitudes and expectations regarding marital relationships and the bringing up of children. This requires not so much a change in the law as a change of heart.

This is an edited version of an article in the current issue of *The Tablet*.



Cardinal Hume, Archbishop of Westminster, officiates at a wedding in Westminster Cathedral: is the marriage bond still sacred?

Old haunts

WESTMINSTER can scarcely contain itself at the prospect of Edward Windsor, joint director of Ardent Productions Ltd (as he styles himself in the trade), engaged on a four-part series called *Castle Ghosts* which he has sold to the Discovery Channel in America.

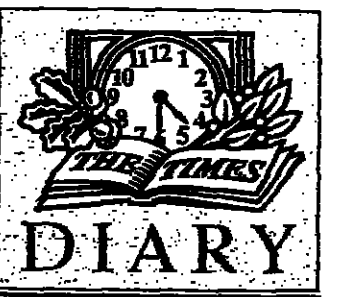
The first episode, filmed after the game Prince tracked down spirits at three English castles — Manchester, Sudeley and the Tower of London — is narrated by the pompous Robert Hardy.

With a litany of royal connections and apparitions to draw on, and a history degree from Cambridge behind him, Prince Edward is confident of success on his spooky venture, says his Ardent co-director, Eben Foggitt.

But his personal ambition has yet to be fulfilled. "I think he's rather disappointed," explains Foggitt. "He has told me he would like to meet a ghost but has yet to do so. He's talked to a woman who is in a state of shock because a ghost walked straight through her, but sadly it hasn't happened to Edward yet," Foggitt adds. "But we still have to film at castles in Scotland, Wales and Ireland for the

series so maybe he'll have better luck at those locations."

Could the Bishop of Coventry, Simon Barrington-Ward, a man who drives a Rover but is more commonly to be seen on his bicycle, have been quietly impressed by Lucy "Godiva" Pearce when she derided so dramatically in Coventry Cathedral? In his address about the environment, he definitely referred to the "ozone tear".



Slugging it

ONE OF the slimmer creatures of British politics is in demand. Kenneth Baker, MP for Mole Valley, wants to buy for his caricature collection the *Spitting Image* pup-

pet which portrays him as a loathsome slug.

"Yes, he has asked for it," says Roger Law, the puppet-maker who has announced his plan to sell all his puppets after the current series finishes. "But I'm not sure I'll let him have it. I don't think he deserves it." He has also received an inquiry for all the master moulds of the Royal Family puppets — at any price.

Swinging

THERE has been alarmingly idiosyncratic behaviour from Alan Howarth, the Conservative defector. His new Labour comrades were bewildered the other day when the Stratford-on-Avon MP ambled aimlessly out of a Commons select committee just as it was voting on its report concerning the Government's immigration and asylum proposals.

Howarth left ostensibly to speak in the Commons chamber, but he never actually made a speech. He had already bemused Labour members of the Social Security Select Committee by turning up with the far left MP Jeremy Corbyn in opposing some of the committee's proposals.

The Maxwell trial is to be commemorated by journalists. They already have a tie for the Jeremy Thorpe trial portraying Rinka, Norman Scott's dog, with RIP underneath. And there is the Gulf War tie, with a cruise missile and the logo "Saddam Busters". There is even a Scott inquiry tie, I'm told. Now there will be the Maxwell tie — showing a hand rising from the



Kenneth Baker doesn't deserve his slug

waves tightly clutching a batch of sodden pension books.

Pitching in

THE DUCHESS of York is not alone in making transcontinental detours of thousands of miles at the drop of an orb. Matthew Harding, the patron of Richard Branson's weather-troubled round-the-world balloon attempt, is popping back from Morocco this weekend to watch Chelsea play Nottingham Forest at home. It's a round trip of 3,000 miles. "It's my second trip. I came back [by private jet] on Wednesday to watch Chelsea beat Newcastle," explains the chairman of the Benfield reinsurance group. "I've been following Chelsea for 33 years. I can't miss a game."

Party pooper

DURING the Maxwell trial, which ended yesterday with a not guilty verdict for the two brothers, Kevin Maxwell said his father was a "frightening character" — after the boy was gazed for smoking at Marlborough, the huge man insisted that he wrote home each week listing his scholastic achievements.



Ghislaine Maxwell: quiet birthday girl

Maxwell Senior was no less beastly to his favourite daughter, Ghislaine. At her 21st birthday party, a modest little affair for a few hundred friends, he made a speech inviting guests to have a jolly time. Then came word that the maestro had gone to bed and couldn't sleep for noise. It was well before midnight, but everybody was asked to leave.

P.H.S.





IN THE DOCK

Britain's financial regulation has been tried and found wanting

The instant reaction to the acquittals in the Maxwell trial is all too predictable. First there are the howls of indignation about the enormous waste of public money — in this case an estimated £30 million. Then there are the demands to abolish the Serious Fraud Office. Finally there are the calls for a leaner, more efficient mechanism to deter financial wrongdoing, probably based on the American financial regulation. Such reactions are almost taken for granted.

But the indignation and the demands for change are well justified. The public may indeed be numb to indifference by the Guinness affair, the Blue Arrow trial, the Barlow Clowes fraud, the George Walker prosecution, the BCCI scandal and the abdication of authority over the Barings collapse to Singapore. Ministers, merchant bankers and lawyers will be tempted just to shrug their shoulders, rally round and assure the public that the British system is the best anyone has ever thought of.

A new round of such official complacency will not, however, serve the interests of the British economy or the City of London. Indeed, it risks further undermining public respect for the law. The Government's first reaction to this fiasco must be to publish the DTI and IMRO reports on the collapse of the Maxwell empire, information which some in the City establishment would dearly like to suppress. The consequences of this debacle should then extend much wider.

The Government must initiate a serious inquiry into the laws and regulations which govern financial dealing. The main issue is not the competence of SFO or of George Staple, its much maligned director. Nor is there any convincing case for abolishing a fraud defendant's right to a trial or for

increasing the SFO's already draconian investigative powers. On a purely statistical basis, the SFO has a perfectly decent record, having achieved convictions in 62 per cent of cases in the seven years since it was set up. The trouble is that the cases that failed have included the most notorious frauds, which have wasted hugely disproportionate amounts of public money and court time.

The experience of these monstrous trials is now conclusive. The common law offences of fraud and theft are simply not appropriate to cover the complicated transactions and chains of contractual relationships which arise in the biggest financial mishaps. Investigators must have a clearer idea before the start of a prosecution of whether or not there has been a breach of the law.

The way to achieve such clarification is to define criminal and civil offences that match the operations of the modern financial world. One approach, proposed this week by the Institute of Chartered Accountants, would be to strengthen the company law offence of *deceiving auditors*, which currently carries a maximum penalty of two years' imprisonment. A broader reform would seek to punish and deter malfeasance through the civil, rather than criminal, law.

The idea of creating a powerful financial regulator, modelled on the US Securities and Exchange Commission, is finding growing support even within the City and the Bank of England, which have traditionally insisted on the lightest possible financial supervision, based on self-regulation. Whichever of the many possible options are ultimately enacted, the Government and the City cannot afford simply to ignore the evidence that the present system of financial regulation has failed.

PADDY'S PROBLEM

The Liberal Democrats lack thinkers and need thought

Over the next few days the Liberal Democrats' leader Paddy Ashdown will make the latest of his periodic attempts to move into the limelight. Tomorrow it is his turn to face Sir David Frost and on Monday he plans what he hopes will be a substantial speech on future policies. His view of himself is as a pacemaker for progress in British public life. His problem is that those on the moderate Centre-Left who sought to break the mould in the Eighties are now with Labour. This includes not just the voters but the key thinkers. When he has to answer the question "what are the Liberal Democrats for?" he is increasingly on his own.

The Lib Dems are not without reasons to be cheerful. The defection of Emma Nicholson symbolises three — their strength in the South-West, an appeal to anxious Tories, and a sense that on issues like Europe they give a clearer lead than Labour. But each of those props is fragile.

The Lib Dems appear to challenge the Tories closely in the West Country and were successful in harvesting the rural anti-Tory vote at the European elections. But Labour's pre-eminence in the polls is consistent across the country. Any revival of socialist fortunes west of Bristol could split the opposition.

The third party's role as a home for Tory protest has been usurped by Tony Blair's audacious appropriation of One Nation rhetoric and a calculated pitch to bourgeois worries on schools and crime. He has also been helped by the Lib Dems' quixotic attachment to taxing more than Labour.

When Tory Governments were in trouble in the early Sixties, Seventies and Eighties the centre party enjoyed revivals that promised a tantalising breakthrough. But in the Nineties the prospects are less good. The moderates who flocked to Grimond, Thorpe and Steel now look to Mr Blair.

The third Lib Dem advantage, greater clarity than cautious Labour, still exists, but it is being eroded. Mr Blair may have

admitted to David Frost that the stakeholder economy was "if you like... a slogan", but Labour is inching towards a more precise definition of policy without it, it appears so far, sacrificing any popularity.

Mr Ashdown is working to sharpen his party's definition. He hopes to act as guardian and pathfinder for the forces of the Centre-Left. He will argue that Labour will need to work out its policies in greater detail to avoid being derailed by a rejuvenated Right. He will welcome Mr Blair's comments on a stakeholder economy but gives warning that a narrow concentration on economics without answers to environmental, European and welfare concerns will leave the Left advancing on too narrow a front.

Mr Ashdown's analysis is persuasive but there is a danger that the Lib Dems may become simply bridesmaids to Mr Blair. In the past Liberal intellectuals such as Beveridge and Keynes saw their ideas adopted by Labour but their party nearly annihilated. Already many of the thinkers who gave the Alliance momentum in the Eighties, such as David Marquand and Roger Liddle, are Blairites. Other younger figures are following fast.

After the election the Lib Dems may hope to influence Mr Blair in return for freeing him from his hard Left but their power would be limited. Any caucus that sought to impede a new government in its own interests would not be thanked by an electorate anxious to let the new leader get on with it.

The Lib Dems might benefit from going back to their roots, with a robust reassertion of liberalism in the face of a lurch to authoritarianism from both main parties, typified by Jack Straw and Michael Howard. It could attract many otherwise disaffected voters, especially among the young. On the age of consent and asylum the party has been bolder than its opponents. Liberalism is an enduring creed. It deserves dedicated advocates.

DON'T BEATIFY ME, ARGENTINA

Film is film and fact is fact, and never the credits shall meet

They want to declare Madonna persona non grata in Argentina. DeMillions want to send packing her and the rest of the cast who are in Buenos Aires to shoot the film of *Evita* with the ageing and outrageous sex-kitten. For Petronella Evita is still the god-daughter of Joan of Arc. The hubbub of graffiti and parliamentary motions leaves no room to state that screenplays are unrecognisable from their originals. Otherwise, what point in rewrite-men? And it is no good explaining to Argentine-boppers that Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber is a composer of familiar tunes — and nothing as dull as a historian.

But it is worth reminding that movie-struck nation that the connection between stars and the personages they represent on screen is necessarily as thin as the storyline. Real life makes only home movies, which all except those with major feature roles in them would pay not to have to sit through.

In Oliver Stone's *Nixon*, Anthony Hopkins gives a convincing performance of the Hollywood star as a bumbling loner stoned to death who would not have survived for even a day in Washington. God must have been disappointed with *The Greatest Story Ever Told*. His only-begotten Son turned out to be a bore with a Swedish accent, and as centurion, John Wayne got only one line: "Truly, this man was the Son of Gaaard." Rock Hudson, Victor Mature and Arnold Schwarzenegger have made successful careers out of beefcaking up dull biographies.

The Scots could object to their nationalist hero, William Wallace, portrayed by Mel Gibson, taking an unconscionable time being disembowelled of his *Braveheart*. But a nation that took David Niven as Bonnie Prince Charlie and Shakespeare's travesty of good King Macbeth knows its Odeons from its tweddly unglamorous Scot Nais.

Hugh Grant gave an original portrayal of Chopin as upper-class English twit with floppy hair. Charlton Heston made Moses a hearty and hairy Aryan. Madonna may not be everyone's idea of *Evita*. But nor was Paulette Goddard like Lucrezia Borgia. Nor were Ida Lupino and Olivia de Havilland first choice by the Brontë Society for the sisters. The publicity described the latter, playing Charlotte: "The sweetness of love and the meaning of torment — she learned them both together." After playing the St Bernadette who gave birth only to the tourist industry at Lourdes, Jennifer Jones split up with her husband to marry her Svengali director, David Selznick.

Film is the most powerful entertainment of this century. Its flickering images reflect, exaggerate and distort the shadows of real life. But *Madonna as Evita* is apter, casting than usual. Both were ambitious young women, who pulled themselves up by the strings of their dancing-shoes to make themselves superstars and populist heroines. Never mind the music or the record. Enjoy the celebrity. Both of the ladies would.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Whose responsibility to instil moral values in children?

From the Head Master of Rugby School

Sir, All Heads surely yearn for the decent behaviour in their schools rightly called for by Dr Nick Tate, chief executive of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (report, January 15; leading article, January 16). However, expressing moral codes as "a modern ten commandments" may not be the wisest way to set out for the Promised Land. Schools must map out very clearly what they expect and then gently (but with granite in the soul) insist on that with a kind of tenacious hope, knowing all the while that failure will be frequent.

Broken laws imply punishment and damnation; perceived values which are met most of the time but not all of the time demand understanding and some forgiving. We should remember that the Ten Commandments were practical things. It is helpful in schools to follow the same line: all actions have consequences on other people and that is the way to present a moral code to boys and girls, rather than as rules which can never be broken.

This requires constancy and consistency, but not absolutism, from every person on the teaching staff. Colleagues will have differing views on such situations as sex before marriage, living with an unmarried partner and so on; but admirable headings, such as honesty, respect for others, patience, a sense of fair play and so on, need to be put into practice, not with a gavel, but by quiet and frequent example. We all need to remember Iago's observation of Cassio: "He hath a daily beauty in his life that makes me ugly."

Unlike policemen and judges, we as educators must accept failure as part of the pattern. Firmly and cheerfully we need to insist on good behaviour in every nook and cranny of our schools but we should be happy when most things go right rather than pompous when one thing does not.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL MAJOR,
Head Master,
Rugby School, Warwickshire.
January 15.

From Dr James Tooley

Sir, While of course I welcome Dr Tate raising the issue of moral decline in his role as family man and Christian, there is a crucial ethical difference between this and his raising the issue as a government spokesperson. Perhaps the most deeply disturbing aspect of Dr Tate's intervention was his mention on Radio 4's *Today* programme that he would seek for his "ten commandments" to be part of the national curriculum when it comes up for review.

In your leader of January 16 you write that "the responsibility for instilling a sense of civic virtue falls more heavily than ever on the overburdened shoulders of the schoolteacher". This is dangerous talk. All of us need to wake up to our moral responsibilities, and part of the reason for moral decline surely lies with the way we have handed over increasing responsibilities for our communities to government.

Following Dr Tate's route will only intensify that abdication of our duties. The best memorial to the murdered headteacher Philip Lawrence would be to eschew government's further encroachment on civil society.

Sincerely,
JAMES TOOLEY
(Director, Education Training Unit, Institute of Economic Affairs),
The University of Manchester,
Centre for Social Ethics & Policy,
Oxford Road, Manchester 13,
January 16.

From the General Secretary of the Professional Association of Teachers

Sir, Dr Tate is absolutely right to stress the importance of inculcating moral values among our young people. Schools do, of course, have an important role to play in this exercise but it must not be assumed that teachers should be the ones to take complete responsibility on behalf of the wider society for ensuring that children are brought up with a sense of values.

While schools must, and many already do, play their part the whole issue of bringing up the next generation must be the responsibility of us all.

Points on pens

From Mrs Sheila Jennings

Sir, I was amused to read that the head of Invicta Girls' School in Maidstone has banned the use by her pupils of ballpoint pens to encourage good handwriting (report, January 13). In the 1930s my school banned the use of fountain pens for the same reason. We continued to use pen, nib and inkwell.

In spite of this precaution my handwriting has always been considered dreadful.

Yours sincerely,
SHEILA JENNINGS,
60 Rembrandt Way,
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.
January 15.

From Dr Jon V. Pepper

Sir, Some will recall ballpoint pens being frowned on in schools 40 or 50 years ago. The reason then was that they were messy and unreliable — particularly the blue ones.

But I also recall that while fountain pens, particularly the better ones, may have encouraged decent handwriting, they also led to chronic outbreaks of thievery in school, something much less serious with ballpoints. Fountain pens would also mean a return to inky fingers and clothes.

It's easy to hanker after the excellencies of the past, whilst ignoring the discomforts and disadvantages. Anyway, I find that most of my students now turn in computer-produced work, which not only is easier for my tired old eyes to read, but is increasingly better organised and presented.

Yours etc.,
JOHN V. PEPPER,
18 Frank Dixon Way,
Dulwich, SE21,
January 13.

A gifted forger

From Mr John Donovan

Sir, Your obituary of Eric Hebborn (January 13) dwells greatly on his notoriety as an expert forger in the 1960s and 1970s. Less known, but nevertheless worthy of mention, were his redoubtable gifts of sculpture.

These abilities were evidenced by exhibitions in Paris and London and his one-man show at the Alwyn Gallery in the late 1970s, which was a sell-out. At the same time, Eric was undertaking private commissions in bronze portraiture whilst living in Anticoli Corrada.

Marie Gray, a discerning art dealer at that time and one who had known Epstein, thought Hebborn's work as good, if not better, a view supported by those fortunate enough to own an original Hebborn. Sadly, the rewards of forgery distracted him from pursuing his undoubted talents in this field.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN DONOVAN,
Great Rissington Farm,
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.

Kind hearts and crowded trains

From Mr Francis Wilford-Smith

Sir, The decline of male chivalry in the face of feminine fortitude in overcrowded trains and buses is not an entirely new phenomenon (Giles Coren's article, "Standing up for gallantry", January 15). In 1943 an eager young 16-year-old Merchant Navy radio officer on his first voyage, I sailed across to New York, where we docked in Brooklyn. Once ashore I wasted no time in leaping aboard the subway, bound for Times Square, the bright lights and adventure.

The carriage filled, and eventually a powerful, heavily-built woman strapping before me. Acutely conscious of my upbringing, my school, my new naval uniform, my ambassadorial role and the honour of my country, I bounded to my feet and offered her my seat.

She looked me very slowly up and down, and in a vicious, nasal Brooklyn voice so chill that it froze me to the spot she replied: "Whadda madder — is yer ass sore?"

Yours faithfully,
FRANCIS WILFORD-SMITH,
Bentleys Farm,
Bosbury, Ledbury, Herefordshire.

From Mrs Marian Lampert

Sir, I am female and 52 years of age. Many parts of me are, sadly, falling down, and some are best supported in a seated position. I positively long to meet Giles Coren on a train.

As for the "consensus on pregnant women getting seats", perhaps this is something new? Some 25 years ago, also travelling between Camden Town and Euston and nine months pregnant, I found the only person to offer me a seat was old enough to be the forthcoming baby's great-grandparent — and a female to boot.

Yours faithfully,
MARIAN LAMPERT,
Grange Corner,
The Avenue, Bushey, Hertfordshire.

From Mrs Maggie Campbell Pedersen

Sir, I sympathise with Giles Coren in not knowing to whom he should offer a seat on the Tube. I recently offered mine to a blind woman, only to be shouted at: her guide-dog pushed off down the carriage, where he lay down, obviously as bewildered as Mr Coren.

Let us hope that chivalry is not dead but merely dormant, and that commitments will again be acceptable too.

Yours sincerely,
MAGGIE CAMPBELL PEDERSEN,
36 Fairlawn Grove, W4,
January 15.

From Mrs John Rabson

Sir, Perhaps travellers of either sex who would like to be offered a seat should wear something to indicate this? I fear though that lapel badge with *Yes Please* might be misunderstood.

Yours faithfully,
ROSEY RABSON,
The Limes Farmhouse,
Eyke, Woodbridge, Suffolk.
January 15.

From Dr A. F. Ollerenshaw

Sir, Mr Coren's reply to the woman who told him that she was only 38, and as capable of standing up as he was, should have been: "I do apologise, madam. I took you to be a lot older."

Yours sincerely,
A. F. OLLERENSHAW,
52 Lightfoot Lane,
Preston, Lancashire.

Hope for homeless

From the Director of St Martin-in-the-Fields Social Care Unit

Sir, I enjoyed Matthew Parris's article about the homeless "Mr Brown" and his temporary residence in a Strand shop doorway (January 15) but felt it ended on a note of unnecessary nihilism. Mr Brown's plight is "without meaning", he says, and there is nothing to be done about him and his like.

What an irony that Mr Parris was en route to a concert at St Martin-in-the-Fields. Mr Brown has been known here under his proper name for many years. His sometimes zany opinions are only one aspect of the whole person. His presence in church and at our soup kitchen and in our day centre for homeless people all have meaning. It is a meaning to do with his individual value and his acceptance within the community here.

In time Mr Brown will undoubtedly be resettled. St Martin's will no doubt contribute to that process, as will the time commendably given by Mr Parris.

Yours sincerely,
ROGER SHALJEAN,
Director, St Martin-in-the-Fields Social Care Unit,
6 St Martin's Place, WC2.

Discarded Tardis

From Mr David Orme

Sir, Dr Gospel (letter, January 17) claims that there is another police box on the prom in Scarborough. It is, of course, the same one as in Hendon.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID ORME,
28 Cranbourne Road, N10,
January 17.



NEWS

Maxwell brothers cleared of fraud

Kevin and Ian Maxwell, the two youngest sons of the media tycoon Robert Maxwell, were cleared yesterday of a £122 million conspiracy to defraud company pensioners in a dramatic finish to an eight-month trial which could spell the end of the Serious Fraud Office. Larry Trachtenberg, an American, was also cleared of all charges. Pages 1, 2-4, 21

City mocks Serious Farce Office

There were calls last night for dramatic changes in the way the Serious Fraud Office operates. Senior City figures and former SFO officers said that they had watched in disbelief as trial after costly trial had foundered. Some have dubbed the organisation the Serious Farce Office. Page 1

Chechens surrender

The Chechen sympathisers holding 170 hostages on the Turkish ferry *Avrasya* surrendered to security forces after contacting lawyers from the vessel. Pages 1, 12

Walking tall

A woman paralysed in a car accident can stand again with the aid of a computer-operated device implanted in her spine. Page 7

Chief teacher

A teacher at a Norfolk girls' school who launched an education programme in Ghana is to become chief of an African tribe. Page 8

Bank bites back

A couple compensated by Lloyds Bank for its bad property advice were ordered to pay the bank more than £250,000. Page 9

Major's vision

The social chapter is an immoral European tax on jobs, John Major said, presenting his vision of an "enterprise economy". Page 10

Royal soap about slippery MPs

Politics will take a back seat to the romantic peccadilloes and financial shenanigans of MPs in *Annie's Bar*, a Channel 4 series made by Prince Edward's company, Ardent productions. It aims to be racier and more scurrilous than *Eastenders*. Page 10

Sermon supremo

The search for the country's top preacher resumes today with the launch of the second Preacher of the Year Award. Page 11

Dole's rival

Robert Dole's main Republican rival, Steve Forbes, is a multi-millionaire publisher with a Utopian vision. Page 13

Conscription ends

French military conscription, in operation since 1789, is to be changed for a force of volunteers and professionals. Page 14

Poll shootings

Israeli troops killed three Palestinians and an Israeli soldier was wounded hours before the Palestinian election. Page 15

Holocaust avenger

A Bordeaux barrister is after Maurice Papon, the last senior Vichy survivor official suspected of complicity in the Holocaust. Page 16



Tony Blair learning how to control computers by eye movements at Loughborough University. Page 10

OPINION

In the dock: The Government must initiate a serious inquiry into the laws and regulations which govern financial dealing. Page 21

Paddy's problem: Liberalism is an enduring creed. It deserves to have dedicated advocates. Page 21

Don't beatify me, Argentina: Madonna as Evita is after casting than usual. Page 21

THE PAPERS

Judging by her frequent jaunts, the spectacularly but unsurprisingly overdrawn Duchess of York seems to love foreign parts: America, where the royals are regaled and where she could pay off her overdraft on the lunchtime lecture circuit, awaits. — The Scotsman

COLUMNS

Basil Hulme: There is a clear need to change attitudes and expectations towards marital relationships and bringing up children. Page 20

Simon Jenkins: Over the past 20 years not one genuine case of rabies has been detected in quarantine. The policy is illogical and obsolete. How does it survive? Page 20

OBITUARIES

Lord Glendon: Conservative MP and Minister of Works, 1959-62; Minnesota Fats, American pool player; Rama Rao, Indian politician and matinee idol. Page 23

LETTERS

Moral upbringing: chivalry in the Tube: Hell; points on pens. Page 21

BUSINESS

Holiday bid: Airtours, Britain's second largest tour operator, is in takeover talks with Carnival, the Miami based cruise firm. Page 25

On the buses: Stagecoach Holdings, Britain's biggest bus company, continued its buying spree with the purchase of two Devon bus services, Devon General and Bayline. Page 25

Forter: Sir Rocco Forte intervened to keep the family company independent by buying almost four million shares in his own name. Page 25

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index fell 0.3 points to 3748.4. Sterling's trade-weighted index fell from 83.0 to 82.8 after a fall from \$1.5230 to \$1.5105 and from DM2.2376 to DM2.2351. Page 28

SPORTS

Cricket: England dismissed South Africa for 129 on a difficult pitch in East London in the sixth one-day international but struggled in reply. Page 48

Rugby union: England would do well to revert to powerful forward play for their opening match in the five nations' championship against France. Page 48

Football: The European Commission gave Uefa six weeks to end its transfer fee system and nationality restrictions or face legal action. Page 48

Tennis: Richard Krajicek and Todd Martin, two of the seeds in the men's singles, were beaten in the Australian Open's third round. Page 42

SATURDAY TIMES MAGAZINE

Pompeii power: In Texas, some girls will murder to be a cheerleader. Page 25

Vivien Greene: Graham Greene had many lovers, but only one wife. Page 8

Hit squad: Will *Trainspotting* be another hit for the *Shallow Grave* team? Page 18

WEEKEND

Doctor Dolittle lives: Marthe Kiley-Worthington's wild ideas about training stropky animals. Pages 1, 5

Travel: family holidays, Italian agriturismo. Pages 6-11

Books: Libby Purves on the memoirs of a wheelchair-bound war reporter plus yuppie fiction. Pages 12-13

10 15

The weekly magazine for young Times readers

Circus stars: the young stars of the all-human Cirque du Soleil on life as a circus animal. Page 4

Win a VIP trip to Coronation Street. Page 3

Best books, music, games and videos. Page 10

VISION

The seven-day guide to television and radio

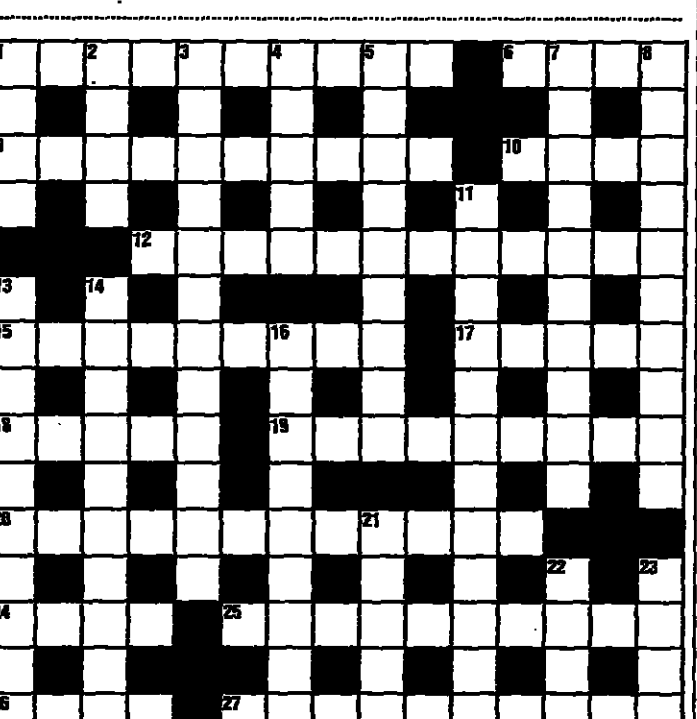
Cover story: Paul Merton stars as a modern Hamlet in a series of Galton and Simpson comedy classics. Friday, ITV, 8.30pm

New blues: *NYFD Blue* returns in a new series. Thursday, Channel 4, 10pm

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,069

ABERLOUR A limited edition, 1970 vintage bottle of Aberlour single malt whisky, the only malt whisky to have twice won the prestigious Gold Medal and Pot Still Trophy at the International Wine & Spirit Competition, will be given for the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The winners and solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address



- ACROSS**
- See what's in store for an outsider (6-4).
 - Characters in front of queue, say, looking down on others (4).
 - As mediator, 'e' is received by leader of race (10).
 - Noticed new cut (4).
 - Representative steps on ladder for each boy (12).
 - Copy a restrictive rule, except for initial line (9).
 - Provide a view round wood (5).
 - Game in which county quickly succeeded (5).
 - Routine start of term — study philosopher and economist (9).
 - Pitch for performing a nocturne? (7,5).
 - Nine letters from here in return for one from abroad (4).
 - Relatively informative diagram of house (6,4).
 - Attention given to Liberal peer (4).
 - Lowest gain her doctor recorded — a stone (10).
- DOWN**
- Immersing page in water produced tears (4).
 - He allowed nothing odd on his vessel (4).
 - Potter's work men up in a shop ordered (3-9).
 - Carefully approach second speech (5).
 - Submission to live on island in stormy ocean (9).
 - Many in parties animated with it? (4,6).
 - Long nenie leaf (4,6).
 - Top sportsman as provider of music (6,6).
 - School subject (10).
 - 'e isn't involved with water (4-6).
 - Put together a small contract, for example, with speed (9).
 - Flower-girl with hot temper (5).
 - Life? That's about right (4).
 - HE has English in for wine (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,063

POWERPOINT A P
P O S T E R
P I S C I N A S C A T O
A A N U K E W A R T
T I V A C E
H E R A B A N A S K I N
A I L D A E A
N O S E A Y K I N D R E D
D I T C H L O V E
S H R I N K W R A P O V E R
P I E C E O F L I N E
H U N A S A T O R K
I G C M A I N T A I N
N E E D L E A S E S
G R S A N D H O P P E R

CUCKOOPIRY AFAR
A O N I A U E
S P L I T H A I R S O N U S
L I T T L E Y A R N E
L A K E B O O M E R A N G
P G R A W W I N
A B E V A N C E C H A R G E
M K H A D
J A L O P Y B A L M O R A L
A E A S H P O Y
N A V I G A T O R S A S H
O R E A R I T H E K
B O D H A R B O U T H E N
U E I A R T
M A T E I N A N Y E V E N T

LAST WEEK'S WINNERS: A Palmer, Southampton; C G Stanton, Ealing; R H Penny, Epsom; Pymouth; D R Carter, Madron; Pender, M E Little, Jullister, Somerset.

TIMES WEATHERCALL

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, call 0891 5001 followed by the code:

Great Britain	701
North East	702
North West	703
Yorkshire & Lancashire	704
West Midlands	705
East Midlands	706
East of England	707
South East	708
South West	709
Wales & South Wales	710
Central Wales	711
North Wales	712
London & Home Counties	713
East of London	714
West of London	715
W & S Wales & Wales	716
N E England	717
Central & Lake District	718
S W Scotland	719
W Central Scotland	720
East of Scotland & Borders	721
E Central Scotland	722
Gloucester & E Highlands	723
N W Scotland	724
Central, Orkney & Shetland	725
N Ireland	726

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London & SE traffic, roadworks	731
Area within M25	732
East of M25 (South/South-East)	733
West of M25 (North/North-West)	734
National traffic and roadworks	735
National roadworks	736
West Country	737
Wales	738
East Anglia	739
North-West England	740
North-East England	741
Scotland	742
Northern Ireland	743

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HOURS OF DARKNESS

Sun rises: 7.56 am Sun sets: 4.25 pm

Moon sets: 7.20 am

New Moon today

London 4.28 pm to 5.58 am

Bristol 4.30 pm to 6.04 am

Edinburgh 4.22 pm to 6.26 am

Manchester 4.28 pm to 6.10 am

Pennance 4.55 pm to 6.11 am

Tomorrow

Sun rises: 7.55 am Sun sets: 4.30 pm

Moon sets: 8.00 am

First quarter January 27

London 4.30 pm to 7.53 am

Bristol 4.40 pm to 8.03 am

Edinburgh 4.22 pm to 6.26 am

Manchester 4.28 pm to 6.10 am

Pennance 4.55 pm to 6.11 am

HIGH TIDES

TODAY

London Bridge 1.01 AM HT 1.28 PM HT

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FORECAST

General: Showery but some bright spells. England and Wales will have a dull start to the morning with fog on the highest ground. During the day rain will affect Cornwall and west Wales but elsewhere brighter spells will develop.

Scotland and Northern Ireland will start rather grey with rain in the west and drizzle over the Grampians and Shetland. Wet and windy weather will continue across Northern Ireland.

London, SE England, Central S England, Midlands, Channel Isles, N Wales, NW England, Lake District: Cloudy, becoming brighter, sunny spells. Dry after dark. Wind south-east becoming east, moderate. Rather cold in the wind. Max 7C (45F).

E Anglia, E England, Central N, NE England, Borders: Grey with mist and drizzle. Brighter spells later but cloudy. Wind south-east becoming east moderate to fresh. Max 6C (43F).

SW England, S Wales: Rain or showers in the west, brighter in the east. Mainly dry after dark. Wind south-east fresh. Max 9C (48F).

Ile of Man, NW Scotland, Glasgow, Argyll, SW Scotland: Rain turning to drizzle. Mainly dry by dusk. Remaining cloudy. Wind south-east fresh or strong. Cold in the wind. Max 8C (46F).

Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, Central Highlands, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: Mainly cloudy with drizzle at times. Wind south-east fresh to strong. Max 6C (43F).

N Ireland: Rain, heavy at times, mainly dry by midnight. Wind south-east fresh. Cold in the wind. Max 8C (46F).

Outlook: Bright spells, especially in the west. Cold and windy everywhere.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

24 hrs to 5 pm: b=brilliant; c=cloud; d=drizzle; ds=dust storm; du=dust; f=fog; g=gale; h=hail; r=rain; sh=showers; s=sleet; an=storm; s=sun; t=thunder

h=hrs; m=mi; C=C; F=F; km/h=km per hour; mph=miles per hour; m=metres; f=feet; s=seconds; min=minutes; h=hours; d=days; w=weeks; m=months; y=years

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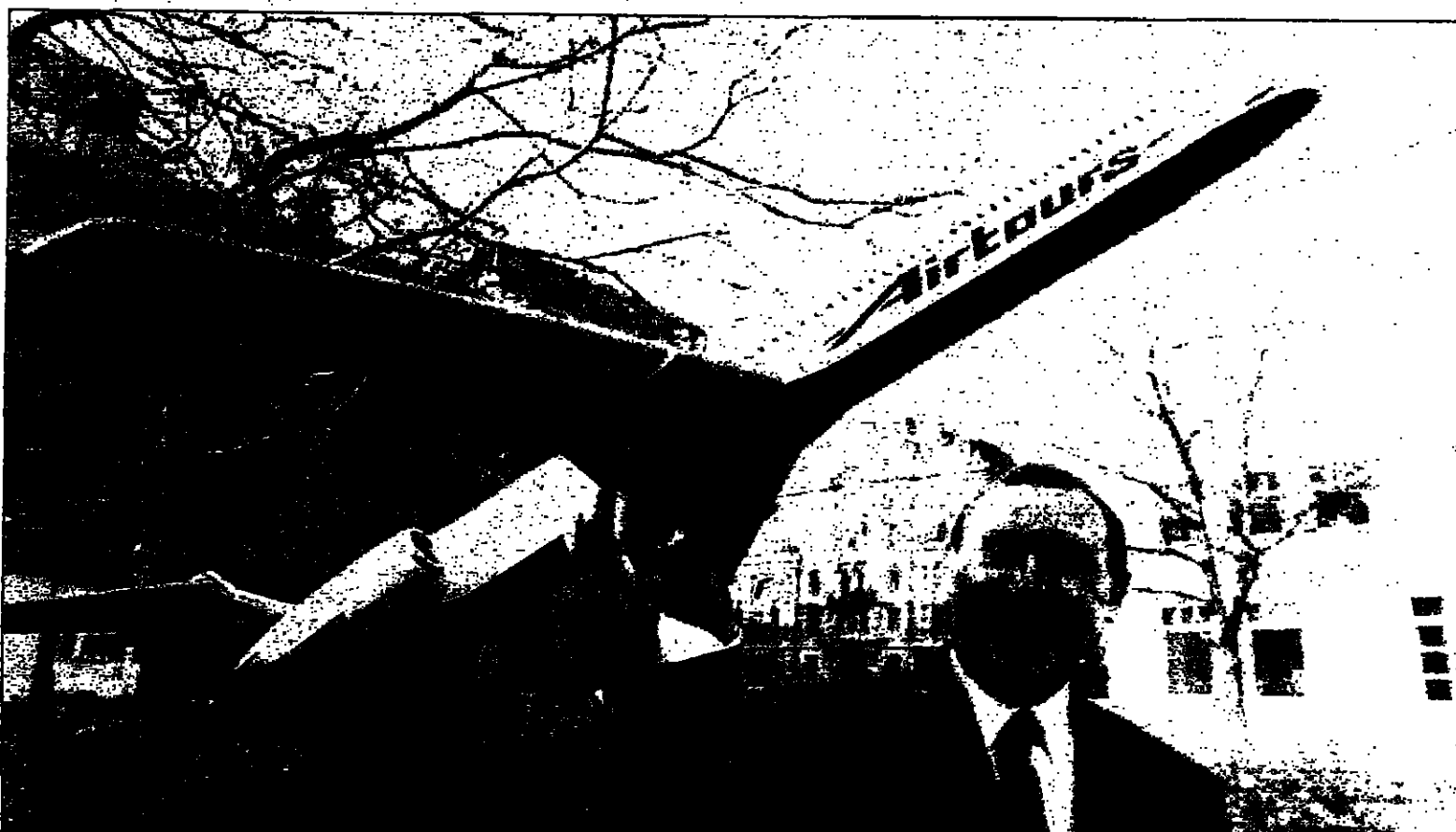
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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

SATURDAY JANUARY 20 1996



David Crossland, whose company, Airtours admitted yesterday that it had been in bid talks with Carnival, the US cruise group based in Miami

Airtours in bid talks with cruise group

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

AIRTOURS, the travel company built up from humble beginnings into the UK's second largest tour operator, admitted yesterday it was in bid talks with Carnival Corp, the US cruise group.

Rumours had been rife since the end of last year that the cash-rich cruise company might make an offer for Airtours, founded 17 years ago by David Crossland, chairman.

But after Airtours' share price surged 38p to 438p yesterday before falling back to 433p, the company was forced to make a terse statement to the Stock Exchange.

On the closing share price, Airtours is valued at £500 million. Beeson Gregory has forecast pre-profits of £68.2 million this year, a rise of £11 million.

"Airtours and Carnival have been in discussions with regard to future co-operation which could lead to Carnival acquiring a stake of less than 30 per cent in the share capital of Airtours by means of a subscription for new ordinary shares and a partial offer to all shareholders," the statement said.

The City believes a tie-up between the two makes sense and would give Airtours solid financial backing in the volatile world of tour operating.

Simon Eccles-Williams, a director with Morgan Grenfell and adviser to Airtours, said if the deal went ahead it would take the form of a conditional placing with a partial offer to all shareholders.

Some stock would be bought from shareholders, and the rest of the 30 per cent stake raised through issuing new shares.

He expected a decision "within weeks" but was unable to say whether a statement would be issued to coincide with Airtours' annual meeting on Thursday.

Under takeover rules, an acquisition of more than 30 per cent would require Carnival to make a full bid for Airtours.

However, if Carnival does take the stake, it will make Airtours virtually bid-proof from other predators, as David Crossland owns 26 per cent of the company, with a value of around £130 million. Airtours has refused to comment further.

Carnival, which is based in Miami, is considerably larger than its cruise competitors, P&O and Trafalgar House's Cunard Line. It has strong cash flow, low long-term debt, and enjoys margins of 30 per cent compared with 12 per cent for P&O.

The deal would make sense for both parties. Eighteen months ago Airtours bought two cruise ships and set up a highly successful fly-cruise programme, while Carnival is keen to diversify into the UK holiday market.

Wayne Sanderson, leisure analyst with Merrill Lynch, said Airtours was believed to be close to acquiring Simon Spies Holdings, which has a 40 per cent share of the Danish holiday market, and an injection of money would help fund the acquisition.

David Crossland, who floated Airtours in 1986, has since set up a subsidiary charter airline, acquired the Aspro, Tradewinds, and Late Escapes holiday brands and bought substantial holiday companies in Scandinavia and Canada.

He shares an aggressive, entrepreneurial corporate outlook with Michael Arison, Carnival chairman and chief executive, who has a 10 per cent holding in the US company. Airtours achieved pre-tax profit of £59.1 million in 1995.

Stagecoach continues buying spree in Devon

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

STAGECOACH HOLDINGS, Britain's biggest bus company, continued its buying spree with the purchase yesterday of two Devon bus services, Devon General and Bayline, for £16.1 million.

Stagecoach, which last month won the rail passenger franchise for South West Trains and which has been criticised by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in the past, said it does not expect any problems with the authority this time.

Although South West Trains operate out of London as far as Exeter, Stagecoach said its nearest bus operation is in Hampshire. The company, which has grown rapidly by purchasing small regional companies, is expected to establish an integrated network for buses and trains in the Exeter area.

The £16.1 million in loan notes will be paid after completion of a completion audit. There could be a reduction in the final price if net assets are less than £5.1 million.

The two bus firms run local bus routes in Devon, employ some 710 staff and operate 320 vehicles. They made a pre-tax profit of £1.7 million on a turnover of £14.6 million in the year ending March 31, 1995. Net assets at that date were £2.6 million.

Stagecoach, which is based in Perth, said profit at the units could be raised by investing in new vehicles and cost economies in fuel, spare parts and insurance resulting from being part of a larger group.

Stagecoach made record pre-tax profits of £32.6 million in the year ending March 31, 1995. The company's shares rose 3p to 345p yesterday.

Stagecoach has been referred to the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) more than 20 times, although the OFT has found against it in only two cases.

Stagecoach now controls 14 per cent of the total UK bus market and also has operations abroad.

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Domestic worries hit pound

By JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS
CORRESPONDENT

STERLING slumped to within striking distance of record lows yesterday as traders talked feverishly about the Government's political difficulties and speculated that Thursday's quarter point cut in rates was taken against Bank of England advice.

The pound sunk to 82.8 on its trade-weighted index against a basket of currencies, not far above its closing low of 82.2.

Such domestic political worries meant that the pound barely held its own against the mark, which has been sliding. It fell against a resurgent dollar.

In spite of the current US budget impasse, the dollar has been bolstered by support from officials and by figures yesterday showing that the US economy grew 3.2 per cent in the third quarter of 1995, slightly stronger than estimated.

Non-farm payrolls rose by 151,000 in December and inflation remained subdued with consumer prices unchanged in November.

Sir Rocco buys £15m of Forte shares

By ERIC REGULY

SIR Rocco Forte stepped up his battle for Forte's independence yesterday by buying 3.9 million Forte shares in his own name.

The Forte chief executive borrowed almost £15 million to finance the transaction, paying an average price of 376p for the shares. He will not sell them to Granada, which has a £3.8 billion hostile offer for Forte closing on Monday.

Although Sir Rocco's purchases represent only a tiny fraction of the issued share capital, Forte thinks every little bit will help in the expectation that the victor will win by a narrow margin. Forte shares closed at 376p, down 5p while Granada closed at 694p, down 2p.

In other developments, Granada said it intended to sell the rump of Forte to a single buyer after transferring its restaurants and budget hotels to a Granada subsidiary if the offer succeeds. The move is designed to avoid a hefty capital gains tax on the disposal of Forte's luxury hotels.

Details of Granada's plans to sell more Forte assets emerged as both sides held their final meeting with Mercury Asset Management, the fund manager that owns about 15 per cent of Forte. The City thinks it is highly unlikely that Forte can remain independent if MAM votes in Granada's favour.

Granada and Forte refused to comment on their meetings yesterday with Carol Galley, MAM's vice-chairman, and her financial advisers, as did MAM. Ms Galley is expected to reveal on Monday whether MAM will support Granada again.

If Granada transferred Forte's roadside restaurants, catering operations, motorway service sites and budget hotels to a Granada subsidiary shortly after the bid closes, Forte would then consist of the Meridien, Grand and Exclusive International hotel chains.

Granada would then sell these chains to a single buyer for about £1.6 billion. Granada expects to avoid capital gains because it would be, in effect, selling Forte for a much lower price than the £3.8 billion it is paying for it.

Forte has said that Granada's plan "could create tax problems for any shareholders accepting the bid". But Granada appears confident that its tax-avoidance scenario will succeed. Henry Staunton, finance director, said: "Forte is wrong. We will sell the bulk of the hotels in one transaction with no tax costs."



Carol Galley yesterday met both

Dutch unlikely to bail out Fokker

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE prospect of Fokker surviving as a standalone aircraft builder looked slim last night. Wim Kok, the Dutch Prime Minister, said it was "completely unthinkable" that his Government, a minority shareholder, would stump up the £3 billion (€2.2 billion) demanded by Daimler-Benz as a contribution to a rescue.

The supervisory board of Daimler-Benz, the German industrial giant that owns 51 per cent of Fokker, will meet on Monday to decide Daimler's next move. Industry sources expect Daimler to approach Aero International Regional, jointly owned by British Aerospace, Aerospaciale of France and Alenia of Italy, with a view to merging Fokker's business with AIR.

That would bring about the long-awaited unification of Europe's leading regional aircraft makers, combining BAE's Avro and Jetstream lines, the French-Italian ATR

business and Fokker under a single marketing umbrella. Ultimately, AIR would slim its operation to a single range of aircraft. Such a move would be complicated by the need for Daimler to make massive financial write-offs, possibly exceeding £1 billion.

Mr Kok and Hans Wijfers, the Dutch Economic Affairs Minister, were set to meet Jürgen Schrepp, the chairman of Daimler, again last night in a final attempt to reach a deal on the rescue. In spite of a march by many of Fokker's 7,900 workers on the Dutch parliament in The Hague earlier in the day, Dutch commentators said the Government could not save the jobs at such a high price.

Thousands more jobs in Britain depend upon Fokker's survival. Wings for two of its jets are made by Short Brothers in Belfast, and the aircraft are powered by Tay engines from Rolls-Royce in Derby.

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Granada's hidden agenda on Forte

A sort of hush fell over the City yesterday, not because yours truly was about to pen his column, but because the outcome of the City's most controversial takeover bid of the Nineties was in the process of being decided.

It was no secret that Sir Rocco Forte, defender of the Forte empire, and Gerry Robinson, chairman designate of Granada, faced a mutual date with destiny in the shape of their respective tête-à-têtes with Carol Galley and her colleagues at Mercury Asset Management. With MAM holding 15 per cent tranches of both Forte and Granada the popular view is that whichever way Ms Galley votes will almost certainly decide the issue. The popular view is probably correct. That said, neither party is leaving anything to chance, witness Forte's love-in with private shareholders at the Grosvenor House earlier this week

and attempts by Granada's camp to seduce the same species over the telephone.

Those of you who suffer this column on a regular basis will be under no illusion as to my own perspective on this £3.8 billion charade. I have been scribbling long enough to take the view (for right or wrong) that certain corporate practices should not be encouraged. Such practices include highly leveraged takeovers and asset stripping exercises. Granada's proposals to acquire Forte just happen to encompass both.

Mr Robinson's grand plan is to create a conglomerate with £4 billion of debt. In order to bring gearing down from some 250 per cent to nearer 70 per cent, Granada will embark on a sale of more than £2 billion worth of Forte's hotel assets at prices unlikely to be enhanced by the fact that potential buyers are well aware of the post-bid strategy.

This tortuous piece of financial engineering is designed to leave Granada with the aspects of Forte that it actually intends to operate, namely the Travelodge and Posthouse hotel chains, along with the Little Chef, Happy Eater and Cote France roadside restaurants.

Those with long memories will recall that an asset stripping exercise of this scale puts to shame the activities of the satellite companies that orbited the ill-fated Slater Walker Securities in the Sixties and early Seventies.

You suspect I exaggerate? You imagine I have succumbed to a little colourful journalism? Not a bit of it. What is chilling about an exercise of this nature is that the City is fully aware of the score. Permit me to quote from a circular issued by Kleinwort Benson yesterday: "The terms of the revised offer have brought the hidden agenda into the open. The accusations of asset stripping can no



MELVYN MARCKUS

longer be denied with the planned disposals outlined in the revised offer four times the initial level stated. "Kleinwort's circular continues: "In this context it can be deduced that Granada's bid for Forte has very little to do with its perceived desire or talent to manage hotels and restaurants. Forte

has higher quality earnings derived from growing and expanding businesses and earnings per share growth of more than double the rate of Granada. Granada needs both."

Irrespective of this, Kleinwort Benson's advice is that Granada's offer is "a fair one" and that investors should "crystallise that value."

I am not, I hasten to add, opposed to hostile takeover bids in principle. I merely hold a few old-fashioned views, one of which is that it is infinitely preferable for predatory companies to possess the resources to mount takeovers than to achieve such acquisitions via the creation of a debt mountain. GEC, with a cash surplus of £2.5 billion, was manifestly capable of acquiring VSEL, the submarine manufacturer, last year and duly did so. Granada does not enjoy such resources and its takeover bid for Forte represents a

financial engineering exercise that is reminiscent of the corporate takeover excesses of the Eighties.

Who were the financial clowns of the Eighties who were ultimately responsible for the sort of corporate megalomania associated with the late Robert Maxwell, who requires no introduction, John Ashcroft, of Coleridge, and John Gunn, who drove British & Commonwealth on to the rocks? Look no further than the clearing banks.

Now, in an era when highly leveraged deals were perceived to be an anachronism, the clearers are encouraging precisely the same sort of corporate activity that cost them so dearly during the last recession. Those who should take a bow over the Granada-Forte affair include ABN Amro, BZW and Chemical Bank.

Granada has spent the thick end of £400 million snapping up close on 10 per cent of Forte's stock. The Forte family, for its part, holds

close on 8 per cent of the equity and Sir Rocco, determined to put his money where his defensive strategy is, purchased some 3.9 million Forte shares yesterday at an average price of 376p.

Whitbread, led by chief executive Peter Jarvis, spent yesterday cajoling City institutions, its £1 billion proposed purchase of Forte's restaurant and budget hotel operations being dependent on Granada's offer failing. Directors of Whitbread are understood to have considered market purchases of a defensive stake in Forte but have not, as yet, taken the plunge.

The deadline is set for 1pm on Tuesday. Before then, word has it that at least one question will be raised in Westminster as to whether the Government intends to permit corporate raiders to use the device of special dividends, payable by the target company, to partially finance takeovers at considerable cost to taxpayers.

Somerfield margin up

SOMERFIELD, the supermarket chain that used to trade as Gateway, pushed up its margin by 0.8 points as its programme of store conversions continued apace. The chain, which is expected to seek a stock market listing shortly, has completed half of its conversions with nearly 300 supermarkets now using the Somerfield name.

The company, in its first interim report, improved pre-tax profits 44 per cent to £24.2 million in the six months to November 11 as its converted stores started to feed in. Debt has also been whittled down, from £465.9 million at the previous year end to £398.8 million. The group does, however, expect profits to grow at a lower rate in the second half.

Kuwaitis launch bid for BI

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

A KUWAITI construction and investment company yesterday launched a £96 million takeover bid for BI, the Midlands engineer.

National Industries Co (NIC) is offering 132p a share in a bid agreed with the BI board - a premium of 20 per cent over the closing price of 110p on January 18.

BI, formerly known as Bromsgrove International, has engineering, plastics and metals divisions.

NIC already owns 22 per cent of the BI capital. The company is quoted in Kuwait, valued at £300 million and made £40 million in profits last year. NIC's main activities include building products and investments. It is 23 per cent owned by the Kuwait Investment Authority.

Robert Kottrich, chief general manager of NIC, said: "BI fits with our strategic growth. We have common interests in the Gulf but the purchase will also allow NIC to diversify its interests."

BI yesterday revealed profits of £44 million, up 21 per cent, on a turnover of £62.2 million, up 17 per cent, for the six months to September 30. There is no dividend.

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Flagging world economy likely to dominate G7

BY JANET BUSH
ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

CONCERN about the flagging world economy is likely to dominate discussion at today's meeting of the Group of Seven industrialised countries in Paris, but the background is marginally more optimistic after rate cuts around Europe.

But finance ministers and central bankers from the seven nations - the US, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Canada and Italy - are not expected to issue a communiqué and little concrete is expected to be decided.

Stagnating continental European economies are likely to be a big talking point, with the German Economics Ministry saying yesterday that the economy probably contracted in the final quarter of the year.

The difficulties of low growth is making the process of cutting budget deficits in order to prepare for monetary union by 1999 even more tortuous, a topic that is likely to take centre stage at Monday's meeting of Euro-



Arthuris wants G7 support

pean Union finance ministers. Some of the gloom has been alleviated in advance, with successive cuts in the German repurchase rate and hopes that official German rate cuts will soon be sanctioned by the Bundesbank.

In addition, France, Britain and The Netherlands all cut rates this week, helping to reinforce the perception in financial markets that the fiscal stranglehold on Europe will be partly alleviated

through easier monetary policy. The German Finance Ministry yesterday denied European press speculation that Bonn and Paris are working on a plan to fix exchange rates between the mark and franc bilaterally in a mini-currency union.

Senior British officials said that the G7 is likely to express satisfaction with the recovery in the dollar against the yen, a big issue last year. US officials have gone out of their way this week to express support for a stronger dollar. However, the G7 is still likely to be perturbed by the continued sluggishness of economic activity in Japan as well as signs that the US economy has flagged.

Jean Arthus, France's Finance Minister, said that he would be pushing the G7 hard to mutually support growth. Other subjects on the agenda today will be continuing discussion on surveillance of economies by the International Monetary Fund as well as the challenge of unemployment before the jobs summit in Lille at the start of April.

Customers cautious on life products

BY MARIANNE CURPHEY

DEMAND for life and pensions products is still subdued and there is little indication of much improvement in sales this year, United Friendly, the life insurer, said yesterday.

George Mack, finance director, said there was "no reason to be wildly optimistic" about prospects for 1996, because adverse publicity surrounding the mis-selling of personal pensions meant "the average consumer still does not feel ready to buy".

His comments contradicted predictions from Allied Dunbar, which forecast "growth in 1996", and other rival insurers who suggested new business had appeared to pick up towards the end of last year.

Total new life and pensions annual premiums at United Friendly last year were 17 per cent down at £27.9 million (£33.6 million), while Allied Dunbar, which also announced new business figures, said its sales had fallen 15 per cent. Some life companies have balanced a fall in sales with the launch of equity bonds. Both United Friendly and Allied Dunbar said they had steered away from such products, fearing the Inland Revenue was about to clamp down on them.

BUSINESS RATES

	Bank	Rate	Bank	Rate
		2.14		1.
Australia S		2.14		1.
Austria Sch		18.74	15.	18.74
Belgium S		2.57		2.57
Canada S		2.170		2.170
Cyprus Cyp		0.746		0.681
Denmark D		8.57		8.57
Finland Mk		7.38		7.38
France Fr		8.05		8.05
Germany Dm		2.38		2.38
Greece Dr		388.00	383.	383.
Hong Kong H		12.25		11.25
India Ru		1.02		0.84
Israel Sh		5.1200		4.48
Italy Lit		200.00		200.00
Japan Yen		174.10		158.
Korea Won		0.888		0.888
Malaysia Gd		2.888		2.888
New Zealand S		2.43		2.43
Norway Kr		10.28		9.28
Portugal Esc		202.50		202.50
S Africa Rd		inf.		inf.
Spain Ps		165.50		152.50
Sweden Sk		10.80		10.80
Switzerland Fr		1.84		1.84
Turkey Lir		1.81	8741.	1.81

ANATOMY OF AN ADMINISTRATION: PART ONE

Countdown to crisis: Last days of Maxwell's empire

Melvyn Marckus charts the progress of the team hunting the missing millions

From his eighth-floor office at Arthur Andersen's Surrey Street headquarters in the City, John Talbot, masterminding recovery operations, enjoyed a clear view of Maxwell House. He looked up from his desk and watched, horrified, as one of his precious assets took off and vanished into the clouds. Fearing a hijack, the speed of Talbot's descent to his colleague's office was worthy of an Olympic sprinter.

The recovery of the Maxwell assets began on a relatively uneventful afternoon at the firm's 120-strong corporate recovery department. Most desks had been cleared and employees were departing into the dusk of Surrey Street, which slopes down towards the Thames. At 6pm, Martin Fishman, a partner, received a phone call from Talbot, head of the division. Talbot's message was concise. A major assignment was in the air. Staff were to be corralled pending his return. The date: Monday, December 2, 1991.

Talbot duty appeared at 7pm. Waiting for him were Fishman and two senior managers, Peter Tuch and Paul Horn. Confidentiality letters were signed and Talbot broke the news. Andersen had been instructed to draw up a contingency plan for Robert Maxwell Group and Headington Investments, the two pillars of the late Robert Maxwell's private empire. Action depended on whether Maxwell's sons, Kevin and Ian, could raise the £300 million rumoured to be required to shore up their tottering inheritance.

Although Talbot had met the Maxwell brothers earlier that day, his information was sketchy. All four accountants were aware of the well publicised problems that Maxwell's disparate empire faced, but the quartet had no inkling of the scale of the crisis that would shortly unfold. The project arrived complete with a pre-determined code name: "Russell" — and Talbot and his colleagues set to work. Various reports had been prepared by Coopers & Lybrand, Maxwell's traditional auditors, primarily for the benefit of company directors who were busy sweet-talking the banks.

As the night wore on, the accountants experienced their first insight into the spider-web-like complexity of Maxwell's business legacy. Coopers & Lybrand's reports showed that the publishing magnate's private interests embraced more than 400 diversified entities, which stretched from the UK and the Continent to Australia and the US. Under Talbot's direction, Maxwell's mysterious empire was broken down into units, with notes made alongside principal subsidiaries. At 2am, Talbot agreed to call it a day, the proviso being an early reunion hours later.

Finger drumming was fashionable after the reunion, with the course of events uncertain. Would the banks choose to support Maxwell's interests or would operation "Russell" become a "job"? Talbot and Fishman spearheaded operations, although Talbot, a highly experienced insolvency practitioner, spent much of the day locked in meetings with Coopers & Lybrand and the Maxwell duo. Horn started to wrestle with the "2.2 report" — an accountancy statement — and the affidavits which would accompany the petition for an Administration Order. Tuch toyed with strategy. Only limited access was available to Headington Investments and Robert Maxwell Group via Michael Stony, the group's financial director. A feel for the size of the group

had emerged but there was little comprehension of the seriousness of the Maxwell malaise until Talbot surfaced, yet again, from his external dialogues. This time, the news was of Krakatoa proportions. Gross liabilities amounted to more than £1.4 billion. A black hole, at least £300 million deep, had been discovered in the private companies' pension funds. The man in the baseball cap had been a minus billionaire.

True to custom, few of Arthur Andersen's staff had been briefed on the hush, hush drama. Some might have sensed that a corporation was in its death throes — if only because of the number of executives working behind closed doors — but they would not have known which enterprise Talbot & Co were zeroing in on.

Nor had Talbot, content to combine confidentiality with cost efficiency, called on more than a platoon at this stage. Sheafs of paper outlined the division of Maxwell's corporate ugliness into key segments. A "2.2 report" had been drafted and a briefing pack prepared to explain to non-insolvency staff how an administration works.

Early on Wednesday it became evident that Maxwell's empire was destined to crash. Finally, the banks reached their verdict. It was a thumbs down to a refinancing: Maxwell's private interests were to be thrown to the administrators. The banks' refusal of support saw the directors of Robert Maxwell Group and Headington Investments duly request Arthur Andersen to petition for an administration. The Big Wait was over. "Russell" was a job.

A highly perceptible gear change took place on the eighth floor as crisp directives emanated from the prospective administrators: Talbot, Murdoch, McKillop, Tony Brierley and Fishman. Allen &

Huxby, managing partner of the London office, who agreed to release as many staff, including partners and managers, as necessary. Brierley and Tuch then joined Talbot and McKillop at Maxwell House. Corporate recovery specialists equate information to power and the information lay in Holborn not Surrey Street.

Midnight tolled an end to fact gathering before the following day's application to the Court for an Administration Order. Much had been gleaned but the data bank was still in the red. Drawing up basic balance sheets to show that Headington and RMG, Maxwell's two holding companies, were insolvent, proved a tortuous task for the bottom line brigade. Brierley worked into the night with the encamped lawyers, drafting and re-drafting the affidavits.

It had been agreed that Talbot and most of his prospective administrators would retire relatively early. Arthur Andersen's marzipan set encouraged their chiefs on this count, artfully emphasising the importance of sleep on the eve of being charged with one of the UK's largest-ever insolvencies.

As the senior managers toiled, there was unanimous agreement, amid chuckles, about too many cooks spoiling 2.2 reports. Tuch, whose role was to co-ordinate the exercise, spent the dark hours putting the finishing touches to briefing packs and amassing bundles of data on Maxwell's private companies in readiness for a 9am session. Typists were in short supply at 4am and Tuch and Horn argued more than once about priorities. By 6am, the paperwork was complete. Time to wend homewards, shower, change and return.

Thursday morning saw Talbot, McKillop and Fishman



Talbot: led team



McKillop: administrator

Over the City law firm, was called in to help draft the 2.2 report. Talbot and McKillop spent much of the day huddled with Coopers, in the City, and the Maxwell brothers — still technically instructing Arthur Andersen — at Maxwell House. Details of Maxwell's corporate collection started to emerge.

Snap analysis was little helped by some of the quaint language adopted by Maxwell's managers. Various assets and liabilities were referred to in terms of £5 or £10. This, Talbot and his colleagues discovered to their dismay, was Maxwellian shorthand for £5 million or £10 million.

Fishman focused on the "2.2 report" and the co-ordination of operations with Allen & Overy's contingent, which set up camp in Surrey Street. The campers, along with leading Counsel, worked on the petition into the twilight hours. More troops would be needed. Brierley and Tuch estimated the likely level of staffing and the required grades.

Brierley liaised with David

finalising legal particulars in preparation for a provisional 10am court hearing. The well-trodden path to co-ordinate and manage an operation of this scale was to split Maxwell's asset base into manageable entities and despatch separate teams — made up of insolvency and non-insolvency specialists — to each satellite: a sort of moonwalk specifically designed for insolvency practitioners. Major problems loomed. Even if Talbot obtained Administration Orders over RMG and Headington, this would only yield control of the operating subsidiaries through share stakes.

Such limited control would not give the administrators the authority to enter premises and hold talks with management. One of the arts of administration, once access has been gained, is to develop a relationship with, and work alongside, ongoing management. Andersen's managers were instructed to:

- ☐ Extract information
- ☐ Work out how much cash was required for survival
- ☐ Identify problems with suppliers.



The image was one of wealth, power and influence but in reality Robert Maxwell had been a minus billionaire

☐ Form a view on the competence and integrity of local management.

☐ Determine a strategy for disposing of the business.

A press blackout was imposed. Because Talbot would only be operating as a shareholder there was little that could be said to reassure thousands of worried employees. A letter aimed at bolstering employees' morale was drafted for each team. Maxwell's interests had been divided into the following groups:

- ☐ London & Bishopsgate;
- ☐ British International Helicopters;
- ☐ AGB;
- ☐ Israeli interests;
- ☐ Eastern European newspaper interests;
- ☐ Sundry Eastern European investments;
- ☐ The European;
- ☐ Property interests;
- ☐ Group assets and investments;
- ☐ African interests;
- ☐ Computer software companies.

Brierley and Tuch presided over Thursday's meeting and talked partners and senior executives through each of the sub-divisions.

It had been agreed that, once the Administration Order was granted, a team would fly to Israel. The choice was Alan Katz, a partner at Arthur Andersen's Leeds office, who brought his own team, including lawyers, to London.

Horn was destined for the US, where he would liaise with Kevin Maxwell and attempt to clarify the situation at the New York Daily News, Thomas Cook Travel Inc and London & Bishopsgate US, one of Maxwell's investment arms.

A tax team, led by Nicholas Woolf, had been created to move in on Maxwell's tax specialists. Talbot joined the gathering at around 10am; the court hearing having been delayed. At 11.15am, after the meeting broke up, Talbot, McKillop, Brierley and Tuch strode purposefully towards the Royal Courts of Justice. Back at Surrey Street, the teams kicked their heels.

No discussions were permitted with colleagues outside "Russell", let alone the blacked-out fourth estate. There had been no leak of the pending administration and the insolvency quarter was surprised to discover that a bank creditor had instructed Counsel to attend the hearing. The bank wanted to sell certain shares held as security. After taking advice, Talbot agreed, but reserved rights to future action should ownership of the shares be disputed. The hearing proved swift. By lunchtime, the Gang of Four had been appointed joint administrators to Maxwell's corporate conundrum. Back at the Surrey Street ranch, a

Gulfstreamed around the world in search of newspapers and power, had been exposed as a mega pretender. Now, his private interests, including *The European*, the *Daily News*, AGB, the market research specialist, and minority investments in Newspaper Publishing, owners of *The Independent*, and Henry Ansbacher, the merchant bank, had crashed. Maxwell House was surrounded by reporters and camera crews when Talbot and his cohorts arrived.

Chaos outside, chaos inside. Access was effectively limited to the 6th and 7th floors, which housed Maxwell's private operations in contrast to his publicly quoted — albeit share frozen — interests in Maxwell Communication Corporation and Mirror Group Newspapers. Staff were few and far between.

Telephones rang non-stop, courtesy of a frantic press, unconsolable creditors and bewildered managers of trading subsidiaries. Talbot and others departed to host a press conference at the City's Chartered Insurance Institute. McKillop was entrenched at AGB's headquarters. Fishman was installed at *The European* opposite Maxwell House in Fetter Lane where Tuch was left to organise the central team.

By close of play, some of Talbot's platoons would be in place at most of the operational locations in the UK, while others had flown to the United States, Hungary, Germany and Israel.

The chunk of meat that Talbot fed to the Maxwell-baying media was that creditors were owed £1.4 billion, of which £800 million was owed to the banks. He refused to put a value on the assets other than to confirm that they were "significantly" less than the liabilities. By far the most important asset was the 51 per cent stake (which turned out to be nearer 55 per cent) in MGN.

Speculation, which the administrators would not be drawn into, had it that MGN (plundered in pension fund and elsewhere) might be worth £300 million, against £500 million based on its suspension price. Maxwell's "private side" officially held a 68 per cent stake in the ailing MCC, which, at suspension, was capitalised at £226 million.

Anatomy of an Administration continues on Monday

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STOCK MARKET PHILIP PANGALOS

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BONUS BONANZA 30

The headlong rush to grab £17bn

WEEKEND MONEY

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Looking for healthy insurance

Loyal customers left in the lurch

Anne Ashworth and Karen Zagor on savers excluded from the distribution of free shares

There is growing discontent among certain longstanding customers who will not benefit from the forthcoming stock-market flotation of the Woolwich Building Society. Also aggrieved are customers of the Alliance & Leicester Building Society. Although the A&L, the fourth-largest society, has yet to announce the details of its conversion plans, certain groups already know that they will be excluded from the free share distribution.

The grievances of those who see themselves arbitrarily shut out from the four-figure payouts will increase the calls for societies intent on going public not to delay the publication of their plans. The law allows societies to fix any date they wish as the flotation qualification cut-off date.

The date can also be announced retrospectively. But this can leave loyal customers in the lurch. The Woolwich

savers who are voicing their concerns are not "carpetbaggers", the term used by Peter Robinson, the Woolwich chief executive, to describe those who had recently opened accounts with the aim of profiting from the flotation largesse, but longstanding savers.

As they told *The Times*, they had, for various reasons, not kept abreast of the rumours surrounding their society, or had, unwittingly, allowed their balances to fall below the £100 qualification limit.

While the Woolwich has no plans to rectify the situation of these disgruntled savers, it does plan to help investors who switched their Tessa savings into corporate bond Peps.

Those who held Tessa accounts and transferred to a Woolwich unit trust or Woolwich life fund have until January 23 to come back to us and we will reinfranchise them," a spokeswoman said. The Woolwich is doing this because it had actively pro-

moted the corporate bond Pep and Pepholders are not eligible for building society membership under the building society rules.

It will also accept anyone who had a mortgage offer before December 31 who accepts that offer within three months and then completes, provided they are still borrowers at the time the society converts to a bank.

Those who have arrears on their mortgages will also benefit from the share distribution. Michael Coulthart from Norwich believed that the £500 worth of arrears on his £42,500 mortgage would disqualify him, although he is working hard to reduce the debt. However, the Woolwich confirmed that, so long as a borrower owed more than £100 at December 31, 1995, and remained a borrower on the conversion date, they would qualify. However, if a borrower's property is repossessed, the entitlement is lost.

DAVID SMITH of Avelly, Essex, is another disappointed long-term Woolwich saver. Over 15 years the balance in his share account has ranged from £2.81 to £5,248. But on December 31, he had only £20 in the account, with another £136 in a Woolwich current account.

"I have been wondering how many other long-term savers with the Woolwich are in a similar situation," he writes. "There must be a lot of people who withdrew money from

their accounts in the run-up to Christmas to buy gifts. It seems to me that in its rush to become a bank the Woolwich is starting to act like one."

The Woolwich said that building society rules prevented it from counting as members current account-holders, as well as those with deposit accounts and investors with Woolwich subsidiaries. There will be a statutory bonus for those in membership accounts who are not eligible to vote.

THE Alliance & Leicester this week closed its Bonus 90, Bonus 180, Keysaver, Midas and Tessa share accounts which conferred membership rights and the right to benefit from the society's flotation. The only accounts now open to new investors are deposit accounts which do not carry the all-important membership rights. The distinction between a share and a deposit account is not always clear to customers.

One saver who has fallen foul of this ruling is Rodabe Rudin from East Grinstead in Sussex. In December, Mrs Rudin, a town council facilities manager, received £3,000 in compensation for injuries she received in an accident. This was not sufficient to open a Bonus 90 or Bonus 180 account which both had a £5,000 minimum investment. This meant that she had to opt for Prime Deposit Account, a deposit account.

However, the branch promised that she could convert the Prime Deposit into a Bonus 90 or 180, as soon as she received the £2,700 proceeds from an endowment policy in January. Mrs Rudin called at the branch on Wednesday only to

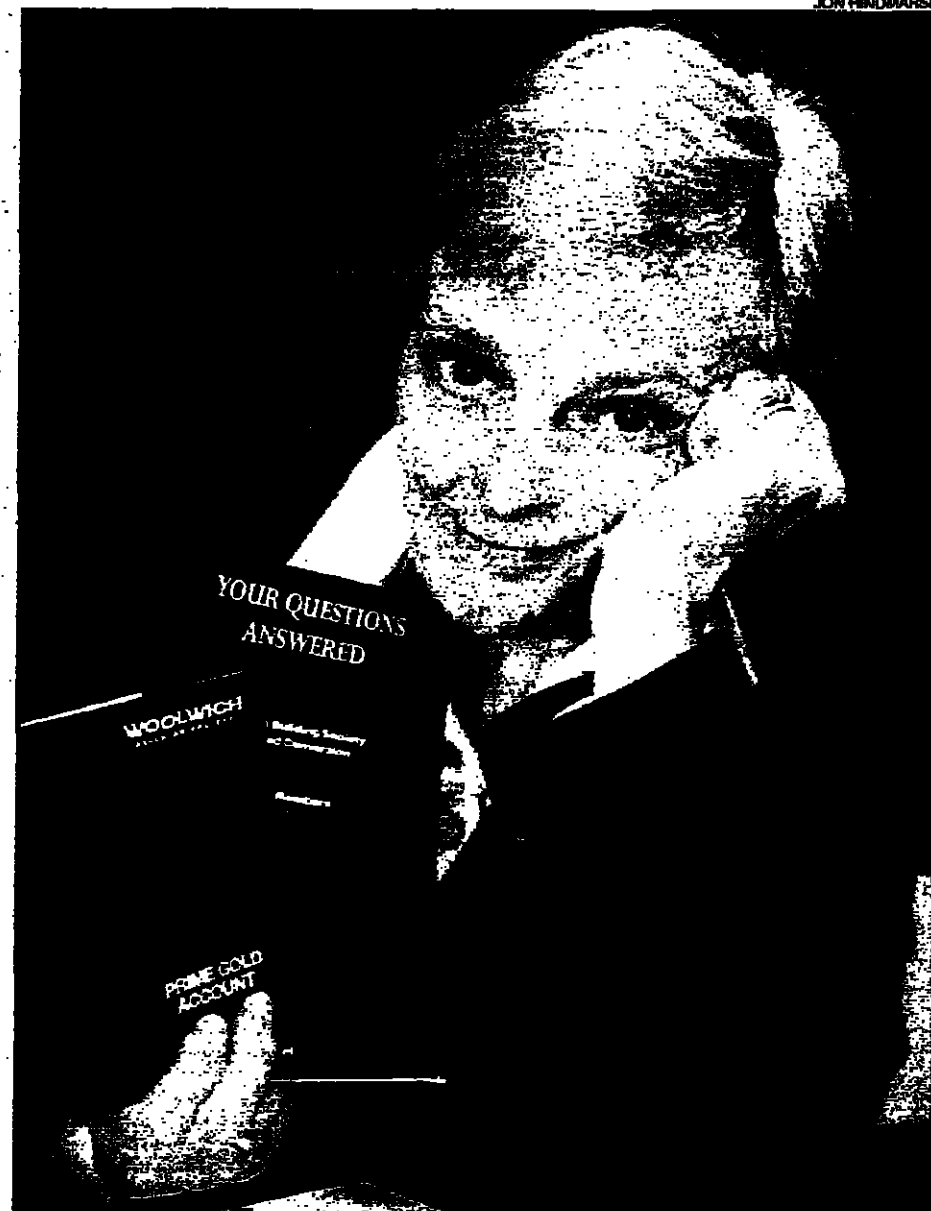
be told that the share accounts were no longer available and that she could not transfer the cash from her Prime Deposit account into either of the share accounts. Mrs Rudin said "I felt shabbily treated, especially as I had been assured that I could convert the account into a share account with a higher rate of interest. My aim in opening the account was not to benefit from the flotation but to find a home for two windfalls. I was given no indication that the deposit account did not carry membership rights."

The Alliance & Leicester said any customer now transferring between accounts would lose their membership status. The only exception were savers who moved the proceeds of their matured tax-exempt special savings accounts (Tessas) into a new Tessa. The branch had not lied to Mrs Rudin, as in December it would have been possible to switch from a deposit account to a share account.

Weekend Money is edited by Anne Ashworth



Rodabe Rudin has fallen foul of Alliance & Leicester rules



Margaret Barnes closed her account two days after the society's cut-off date

THE LOYAL SAVER WHO MISSED OUT

MARGARET BARNES, from Reading, was prevented by a serious illness from following the gossip about the building society's plans to shed its mutual status (Karen Zagor writes).

On January 2, Mrs Barnes decided to close her Woolwich Prime Gold account, which she had held for 25 years, because of its declining returns. Unfortunately, only those who were qualifying savers and borrowers at December 31, 1995, and remain such until the flotation date will receive free shares. This news was not announced until January 11.

Mrs Barnes said: "Unlike the speculators so prominently mentioned in newspaper reports, we were not even aware that flotation was on the cards. As I have been seriously ill, these sorts of things have passed us by. We

did not even have the opportunity to leave a minimum of £100 in our account in order to qualify, even though we were qualifying members at the cut-off date."

A Woolwich spokeswoman said that the board made its final decision to convert on January 3. Because of the extensive paperwork involved in notifying 4.25 million members of its decision, the society waited until January 11 to make its announcement.

BRANCH CLOSURE HITS BONUS

AN elderly reader who prefers not to be named is barred from the share largesse by the closure of her branch. She shut her account in early January after 13 years with the society when she learnt that her branch, in Deal, Kent, was being closed on January 5. Accounts were to be moved to the Ramsgate branch 14 miles away.

For a pensioner without a car, who used the account for small transactions, this was untenable. So she moved her funds to the Northern Rock, across the road.

She said: "There are many people like me in this district — pensioners, who feel rather miffed at losing any bonuses after many years with the society."

The Woolwich said: "The closing of branches and the decision to convert were not related at all. The branches were closed for good business reasons. We do try to take steps to keep customers with us, albeit they may have to travel further to a branch or deal with us by post."

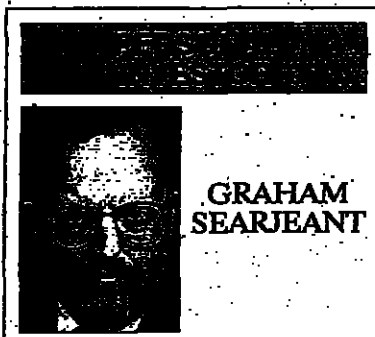
It's good to stay in control

After the Halifax and the Woolwich, Alliance & Leicester and Britannia may join a queue of building societies determined to convert into quoted plc's. But what kind of plc's do their members, the potential future shareholders, want them to be?

These societies are unlikely to reach the stock market for eighteen months. But now is the time for them to think through whether they want to ape Abbey National, now just like most other banks, or to become a different kind of company that carries advantages of plc status but retains some of the character of building societies.

Conversion distributes a capital windfall today, but creates an obligation to pay dividends on that capital in future. Members suddenly find concrete evidence that they were stakeholders in their societies all along, even if most did not realise it. As shareholders, many may want to cash in, say thanks for the memory and revert to the status of just depositor or borrower.

As many millions may wish to keep that newly realised stake and even to exercise rights attached to it, such as voting on the policies of the board and the pay and perks of top management, if societies follow the pattern of privatised companies, such as British Gas, most shares and all power will end up in the hands of City fund managers. Directors will then pander to City culture, which values massive share options for bosses and mass firing of employees. They will ignore small investors, whose opinions vary unpredictably on such matters, as a tedious,



GRAHAM SEARJEANT

Impotent nuisance. That City control can be good for financial performance. Feeling institutional barons breathing down their necks gives managers a great incentive to guard cash flow and keep it flowing to investors.

If members still want to stay in charge, they could press for constitutions that stop the barons elbowing them aside. For once, they are in a position to insist. It only needs rules that prevent any one holder or agent from voting more than 1 per cent (or 10 per cent or 0.1 per cent) of the capital. You could even limit dividend rights similarly. And to stop management becoming takeover-proof, you could allow a simple numerical majority of shareholders to remove the restrictions, or automatically enfranchise any bidder who secures more than 60 per cent acceptance. There are lots of variations if the will is there.

What of those managers, who are well placed to manipulate the passage

to flotation? They may merely want a quotation to establish a better price for a future takeover of the business, and options and contract terms that would make that pay them well. They may want to use the quotation to expand the group by acquisition, and be anxious to play by the rules of the fund barons who could most reliably back future share issues. Or they might want to keep the character of the society in plc form, doubtless including the tradition of ignoring members' wishes.

Members should therefore expect their managers to tell them that only conversion to a conventional, City-controlled plc is possible, practical or sensible. This is what their City advisers, brokers and fund managers will tell them. Norwich Union, the insurance group that will convert from mutual to plc, is itself a top baron.

Such advice is wrong. There is nothing in Stock Exchange listing rules, or in guidelines from the Institutional Shareholders Committee, to prevent small shareholders setting rules to stop City barons taking control. Some will vote with their feet and boycott the shares, but not many if all societies adopt similar rules. Only if the board plans to issue lots of new shares for acquisitions — rarely a good idea for investors — are the barons needed.

There is always a price to pay. Any restriction that limits potential market demand for a company's shares will affect their price. Members and managers should weigh that carefully against the value of control before they decide what shape their flotations should take.

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Bounty hunters' bonus bonanza

Karen Zagor on the ramifications of the headlong rush into building societies that could very soon add £17 billion to the pockets of consumers

Bounty hunters searching for bonuses from the next building society merger or stock market flotation have poured into the Alliance & Leicester, Britannia, Bristol & West and Bradford & Bingley building societies in recent months. The influx has been so great that the Britannia and Alliance & Leicester both stopped accepting new customers this week for accounts that confer membership status.

Although A&L is still paying lip-service to mutuality, the move was seen widely as a harbinger to a flotation announcement. Shortly before the Woolwich revealed its flotation plans last week, it closed its doors to new depositors who were opening accounts at a rate of 15,000. Those who rushed to open accounts to get a bonus — dubbed "carpet-baggers" by the Woolwich's chief executive — will have been thwarted: the cut-off date for eligibility for a Woolwich bonus was December 31.

The Building Societies Commission has said

NATIONAL & PROVINCIAL

As part of the takeover offer from Abbey National bank, which itself converted from a building society in 1989, qualifying National & Provincial borrowers and savers of less than two years' standing at December 31, 1995 will get £500 in Abbey National shares.

Those who have saved for more than two years will get £750, which they can take in cash or shares. They will also get extra cash or shares in proportion to their savings. The amount is expected to be at least 5 per cent of savings. Provided N&P members approve the offer, the deal is expected to be completed by the end of this summer. The share distribution should follow shortly afterwards, and new shareholders who want to cash in can expect access to a dedicated sharedealing service.

Value of takeover offer: £1.35bn.

N&P Helpline: 0345 697349.

CITY & METROPOLITAN

Stroud & Swindon started the year by announcing the takeover of City & Metropolitan. Qualifying City & Metropolitan savers will get a £50 bonus, plus the lower of 5 per cent of their balance on November 30, 1995 or April 18, 1996. The top payout will be £2,500 on savings of £50,000.

Potential gain for members: £5 million.

CSM Helpline: 0345 045012.

NATIONWIDE

The Nationwide, now the second biggest building society, will become the biggest once the Halifax converts. It is substantial enough to become a plc in its own right, but has said it intends to retain its mutuality. It may, however, prove an attractive takeover target itself for one of the big banks. The Nationwide is not believed to be hunting for other societies to acquire.

Potential gains for members: £5 billion.

FORTE

As the countdown continues to the close of Granada's bid for Forte, investors stand to make a pretty penny. At the time Granada made its offer, Forte shares were 275p.

Granada's offer, revised last week, added a special dividend of 47p per share and included four new Granada shares and £23.25 in cash for every 15 Forte. The revised Granada offer values Forte at 388p (at trading close on January 18), or 362p a share for the all-cash offer.

Shareholders will have to weigh up whether this is better than Forte's move to elicit shareholder loyalty. This includes an £800 million Forte share buyback and distribution of Savoy shares at 330p and 400p, and a pledge to raise its final dividend by 21 per cent this year, and for dividend increases of at least 20 per cent a year for three years. Under the buyback, shareholders will receive 184 gross for every 100 shares, plus £23 of Savoy shares and a continuing interest in the new Forte of 79 shares. The increase would lift Forte's dividend to at least 14.69p net for 1998-99. Both Granada and Forte will lift the investor Gold Card discount to 12.5 per cent. Private investors will not benefit from any tax credits.

Helpline: Granada, 0171 490 5200.

Forte: 0800 468 602.

societies have free rein to choose a payout qualifying date. When the A&L follows the Woolwich's lead and converts from a building society to a publicly held bank, the proportion of adults in the UK benefiting from a windfall merely by being qualifying members of a building society will reach about 45 per cent, according to Simon Briscoe, UK economist at Nikko Europe. Mr Briscoe's estimate includes the one million members of Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society who have already received an average bonus of £2,200 each from the takeover by Lloyds Bank.

When the dust settles, the building society

sector will be a lot smaller. Of the top six societies in terms of assets in 1995, only the Nationwide will remain. Rob Thomas, building societies analyst at UBS, says the Nationwide will be the only society left that is big enough to convert. This leaves merger as the main option for smaller societies looking to expand. By growing through merger, societies can cut their overheads, making it easier to offer competitive mortgage and savings rates, while remaining committed to mutuality.

New rules, which came in last October, allow a society to distribute up to 5 per cent of its assets to members if they agree to a merger. The increase from 1 per cent makes it more

BILL SANDERSON



THE OTHER POSSIBLE CANDIDATES

Just as the takeover rumours surrounding the Bristol & West in recent months had started to die down, the society this week revived the speculation by lifting the minimum amount needed to open a membership-conferring account to £2,500. Although the move was intended to deter bonanza hunters, it is bound to have the opposite effect.

Almost every society that has ended up merging or converting to plc status has started the ball rolling by raising the minimum amounts needed to open saving accounts or shutting out new savers from accounts that confer membership status.

A day later, Northern Rock followed Bristol & West, increasing the minimum opening investment in all share accounts to £2,500 from £250. Adam Applegarth, the society's general manager, said: "We have consistently said speculation may force us to take this step and for the time being the genuine small saver will be unable to open an account with Northern Rock. Hopefully in the near future we will be able to return to a more sensible opening balance."

Bristol & West is regarded as the weakest of

the 20 top building societies. It is not in a strong enough position to convert on its own, but its lacklustre performance may make it an attractive takeover target. The society maintains that it has no plans to merge or convert. Other potential takeover or merger candidates on the speculation list include the Chelsea, Skipton, Lambeth, Scarborough, Coventry and National Counties. Gamblers are also betting that more mutual insurers will follow Norwich Union's decision to float.

Less likely candidates include the Britannia, Bradford & Bingley and the Yorkshire. The Britannia has led the pack in announcing plans to reward members by sharing profits with them rather than converting. It is big enough to acquire smaller societies.

The Yorkshire has set minimum rates on savings accounts and is offering permanently discounted mortgages to give members more reasons to applaud mutuality. Meanwhile Northern Rock has started paying loyalty bonuses to long-term mortgage customers. But, as Halifax members can attest, protestations of eternal mutuality can come to naught.

likely that members of smaller societies would approve merger plans. An alternative is for societies to form federal links, spreading the costs of new technology and marketing without losing their independence.

While consumers are betting on more merger activity in the new year, Mr Thomas expects a period of calm. He says: "Members now expect to get money from a merger, but the members of the acquiring society don't get anything, so there is always the possibility that a merger announcement would open the two societies to an unwelcome hostile approach. It was the N&P's abortive attempt to merge with the Leeds which ultimately led Abbey National to make its move. I imagine most societies will keep their heads down."

Outside the building society sector, picking company shares for their takeover potential can be lucrative, as holders of Forte shares can attest. But choosing takeover stocks is an inexact science and speculators run the risk of big losses.

HALIFAX

Members of the Halifax and Leeds Permanent building societies, which merged last August, are expected to get between £800 and £1,000 in shares when the now enlarged Halifax goes public, probably early next year.

Longer-standing members will get extra shares based on the size of their savings. If the first-named person on a joint mortgage or savings account dies before the flotation, the second named will receive the basic bonus, but not any additional variable distributions.

The exact value of the free share issue will be decided immediately before the flotation. The Halifax is believed to be considering a scheme that would guarantee members a minimum share price. Those under 18, or with less than £100 in their account, will get cash payments. Potential gain for members: £3 billion. Members' helpline: 0800 888444.

ALLIANCE & LEICESTER

Alliance & Leicester, the fourth biggest building society, continues to be coy on the subject of flotation, but an announcement is believed to be imminent. It is expected that the Alliance & Leicester's plan will include paying qualifying savers an average of £900 in shares. Speculators can no longer open qualifying accounts at the Alliance & Leicester.

Potential gains for members: £3 billion.

BRADFORD & BINGLEY

Bradford & Bingley is very committed to mutuality. To deter treasure-hunters, it set a minimum opening balance of £500 on its savings accounts last year. In the coming weeks, the society will announce a members' benefits scheme, giving members a tangible taste of the society's profits. A spokesman said: "We have no intention of trying to convert or merge."

Potential gains for members: £1.5 billion.

WOOLWICH

Woolwich members will have to wait a bit longer. The conversion of the third biggest building society into a publicly held bank, and the associated stock market flotation is not expected before the end of next year.

The flotation, which values the society at about £3.5 billion for members, will translate into about £1,000 for each qualifying member.

The Woolwich modelled its conversion plans on those of the Halifax, increasing the odds of a successful outcome.

Those who qualify for a bonus include savers and borrowers with at least £100 in one of the society's share accounts, or £100 outstanding on a mortgage on December 31, 1995. The account or mortgage must remain open until after the conversion.

Savers need to be careful not to withdraw too much money from their accounts. The size of the payout will depend on the lower of two balances, one on December 31, 1995, and the other on a date to be determined. Anyone who depletes their savings account in the meantime, risks losing a portion of the bonus.

Potential gains for members: £3.5 billion.

Woolwich helpline: 0345 022033.

A QUESTION OF MONEY

Will it pay to switch to a rival of British Gas?

The rule of British Gas is, at last, to be challenged. In the first moves towards full domestic competition in the gas supply market, householders will have the option to switch to a British Gas rival. The lure will be savings of about £50 on an annual bill of £350. The first pilot scheme begins in the early summer. But how will the break with tradition work? We answer your questions.

Q In what areas will consumers be offered an alternative to British Gas?

A About 500,000 household customers will be eligible to switch supplier, in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset. Competition is scheduled to begin on April 1, though largely because of delays in drawing up licences at the Department of Trade and Industry, British Gas is calling for the start date to be put back to June 1. From April 1, 1997, the pilot is scheduled to be extended to a further 1.5 million homes in Avon, Dorset, East and West Sussex and Kent. Under the 1995 Gas Act, nationwide competition must be introduced by January 1, 1999.

Q Tell me more about the companies who are coming into the market. Are they established businesses who can be relied on to maintain gas supply? Or are they opportunists?

A Many of these rivals have the backing of leading international oil companies that produce gas in the North Sea, such as Amerasia Hess, Phillips Petroleum and Total. Others are backed by utilities such as Sweb and Eastern Electricity. Some have spent millions of pounds preparing to compete for customers. Each will be licensed by the Department of Industry, which will seek to ensure customers are not left in the lurch.

Q Who will bear the cost of switching, the householder, or the supplier? Will I need new equipment installed? Will it be complicated?

A There will be no charge for switching supplier. Gas will be supplied through existing pipes, and measured by the existing meter. The householder will sign a contract with a new supplier, who will make all the arrangements. The householder may be asked to read the meter on the handover day and send off the reading, although British Gas staff will try to check as many as they can.

Q If I switch to one of the newcomers, what will my saving be? Will the price differential be maintained, or will the newcomers

gradually increase prices? What will the level be of standing charges?

A Not every potential player has yet declared its hand. One that has is Amerasia Hess Gas, which is promising savings of 15 per cent, or around £50, on the average annual bill of £350. That is based upon a 15 per cent cut in the British Gas standing charge of £9.48 a quarter, as well as cheaper fuel. Amerasia is promising to fix prices for two years.

Q How is British Gas fighting back, or will it give up without a fight?

A British Gas certainly won't give up without a fight. It aims to keep customers by persuading them it offers the best service.

Q Will British Gas try to match the price saving?

A Clare Spottiswoode, the gas industry regulator, says British Gas will be free to offer price cuts to customers in the South West. But it will have problems doing so, because of the high price at which it has contracted to buy its gas supplies. It might also face problems with the Office of Fair Trading if it offered lower prices in an area where there is competition than in areas where its monopoly has yet to be removed. We do not know whether Ofgas will oblige it to maintain identical prices nationwide.

Q In the light of British Gas problems with its service contract, will the competitors be offering similar service deals, or will they shy away from such arrangements?

A Service contracts will be on offer at lower prices than the £93 charged by British Gas for a three-star contract in the South-West. Amerasia has teamed up with Sun Alliance to promise an annual service contract for £80.

Q Will the newcomers be regulated by Ofgas, or can they, largely speaking, do as they please? What protection will be given to the elderly and those customers with difficulty making repayments?

A The newcomers will require licences issued by the Department of Trade and Industry to operate, and will be supervised by Ofgas. The existing Gas Care register for pensioners and the disabled will be continued under the new licensing arrangements. People who have difficulty paying their bills will be offered advice, including the option of a pre-payment meter. They will not simply be cut off.

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NATIONAL SAVINGS

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The latest chapter in the pensions debacle

The history books of the next millennium will relate how the £4 billion personal pension scandal of the 1990s damaged the reputation of the financial services industry. They will also tell how life insurance companies were given an opportunity to salvage their good names but, inexplicably, failed to seize the chance. Businesses that spent advertising marketing millions each year to persuade potential customers of their solidity and general excellence lost much of their credibility by not making swift amends to the scandal's victims. In an act of corporate self-destruction, they preferred to postpone compensation payments to these 1.5 million individuals, although apologies and generous handouts would have been a public relations coup.

For these people, wrongly advised to leave or never join company pension schemes, the curious behaviour of the insurers and the other members of their industry is of more than academic interest. A progress report into the Securities and Investments Board's review of personal pension mis-selling, published this week, reveals that the compensation process is proceeding at a snail's pace. Unless there is some action

soon, the sorting out of the personal pension problem may grow into as large a *cause célèbre* as the scandal itself.

As we report on page 33, several household name insurance companies have yet to write a single compensation cheque. Also dragging their feet are some independent financial advisers (IFAs), who have taken refuge behind judicial reviews and other pretexts for procrastination. One of the main reasons for consulting an IFA is the personal care and disinterested attention supposedly on offer. Being kept in the dark about your right to redress scarcely suggests a special relationship. Those advisers who take their duties seriously must wonder what madness has gripped their peers and whether they still value the continued existence of independent advice.

According to the SIB report, as many as 250,000 of the most urgent cases for compensation, including nurses, miners and policemen, have yet to be told by their adviser that compensation could be available. This piece of information alone indicates that the SIB and the other regulators involved in the affair are acting more as trade associations, than as watchdogs. In indulgent Oprah Winfrey-style, the

a claim form should send it back as soon as possible. This means that they will have no more excuses for putting off to tomorrow what they should do today.

Called to account

IT WAS inevitable that a number of customers would be excluded from the Woolwich and Leicester flotations, but unfortunate that some of these should be long-term savers. These were people who saw the society as a convenient home for their cash, rather than as a means to a profit. They have paid the price for not following the rumours about which society would be the next to go public.

Their experience will make other savers wary of closing accounts and even more suspicious of building society chief executives who ceaselessly voice their commitment to mutualism, while having talks with merchant bankers. It is, perhaps, in the nature of any business to say one thing and do another. But building society directors should realise that their business, whether as a mutual, or as quoted company, is based on good will which merchant bankers can quantify, but not supply.

SIB is empathising with its members' problems, rather than attributing blame and issuing rebukes.

If, by the spring, some life insurance companies and independent advisers are still reluctant to act, the watchdogs should use some of their members' money to mount an advertising campaign alerting potential claimants to their rights. Such a move would be a neat counterpoint to the Government-sponsored campaign of the early Eighties, which promoted personal pensions as the universal panacea and the route to retirement income fulfilment. The SIB should also act to ensure that no claim will be time-barred under the six-year legal limit.

To give life insurers and the rest an example of how to behave, anyone receiving

WHAT'S THE BEST OPTION FOR YOU

BANKRUPTCY may be the best option if you have little in the way of assets and do not own property. A bankruptcy typically lasts for less time than an IVA and the debtor usually pays less. Any amount owing after the bankruptcy is discharged can usually be written off.

Although the bankruptcy is discharged after three years, it may prevent you from ever getting a mortgage, credit card or bank account and may make it impossible ever to practice as a solicitor or accountant.

To become bankrupt, you must first petition the county court using a form 6.27, an affidavit and statement of affairs. Any creditor owed £750 or more can also petition.

The petition is followed by a court hearing. An insolvency practitioner may be appointed as trustee and a creditors committee may also be formed.

IVAs are imperative for anyone who runs a business, drives a car or is in public office. If you are in one of the professions where bankruptcy is prohibited, you will not be able to work while you are bankrupt, but an IVA generally will not have the same impact. If you run a business, it will be able to trade and generate income. Although all IVAs are recorded in a public register, they are less likely to ruin your credit rating than a bankruptcy. With an IVA, you are not under the same obligation to reveal your tainted

credit history as a bankrupt. To arrange an IVA, contact a licensed insolvency practitioner who will help prepare the proposal and will ultimately help the debtor apply to the court for an interim order. This will be followed by a creditors meeting. Once all parties are agreed, a supervisor (usually the insolvency practitioner) will police the arrangement, ensuring regular payments to the creditors. If the terms of the agreement are broken, the supervisor can petition for bankruptcy.

The Debt Advice Handbook is available from the Child Poverty Action Group Ltd, 1-5 Bath Street, London EC1V 9PY. Cost £9.95.

KAREN ZAGOR

How a brief bout of bankruptcy can blight your future

Karen Zagor on the insolvency that faces the Duchess of York and thousands of others each year



The Duchess of York could face bankruptcy proceedings

As the Duchess of York contemplates the prospect of personal bankruptcy over her mounting debts and the Queen's refusal to pay the bill, she can take comfort in the fact that she is in good company. In the last year, scriptwriter and actor Colin Welland, Paula Yates, former England goalkeeper Peter Shilton and Screaming Lord Sutch have all come close to bankruptcy.

For the formerly rich and currently famous, personal bankruptcy is an inconvenience that need not be devastating. Celebrities can get mileage out of their fame, even when they fall on hard times. It is hard to imagine the Duchess of York ever being denied access to a bank account or credit card even if her creditors do force her to declare bankruptcy. But for the tens of thousands of ordinary people who also become insolvent every year, even a brief bout of bankruptcy can blight their prospects for years to come.

John Alexander, head of insolvency for accountants Pannell Kerr Forster, cautions that "bankruptcy can hang over you for years. Someone who has once been bankrupt may never get a mortgage, credit card or bank account again. It can ruin your credit rating forever."

Strictly speaking, insolvency is the state of being unable to pay debts when they fall due and bankruptcy is the formal insolvency procedure for individuals. The number of individual insolvencies in England and Wales is starting to decline after shooting up sharply in the early 1990s. In the first nine months of last year, there were 20,044 individual insolvencies, down from 24,095 a year ago. This is an improvement on 1992, when the number of individual insolvencies hit a peak of 36,794. But the 1995 numbers are significantly higher than in 1990, when there were only 13,987 individual insolvencies.

If no one steps in to save the Duchess, she may be able to avoid bankruptcy with an Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA). Essentially, this is a schedule of payments that have been agreed upon by the creditors. For the debtor, the main

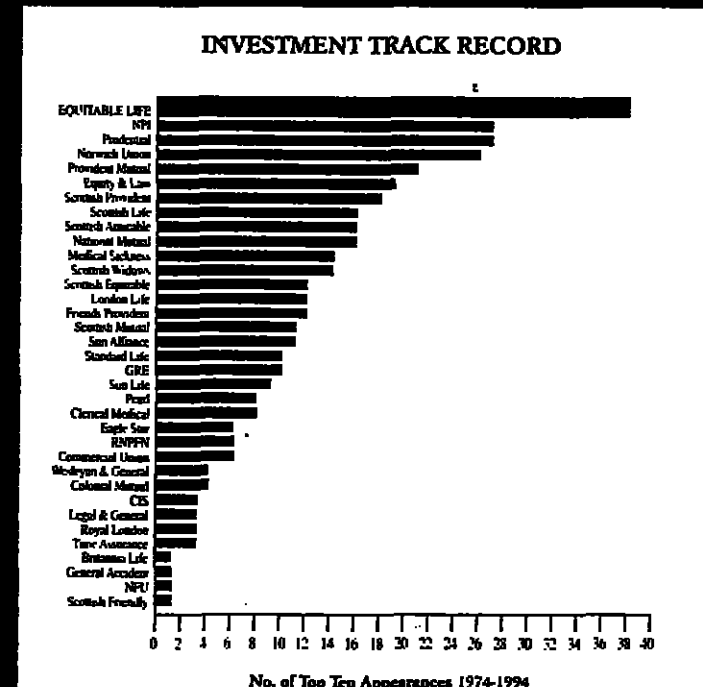
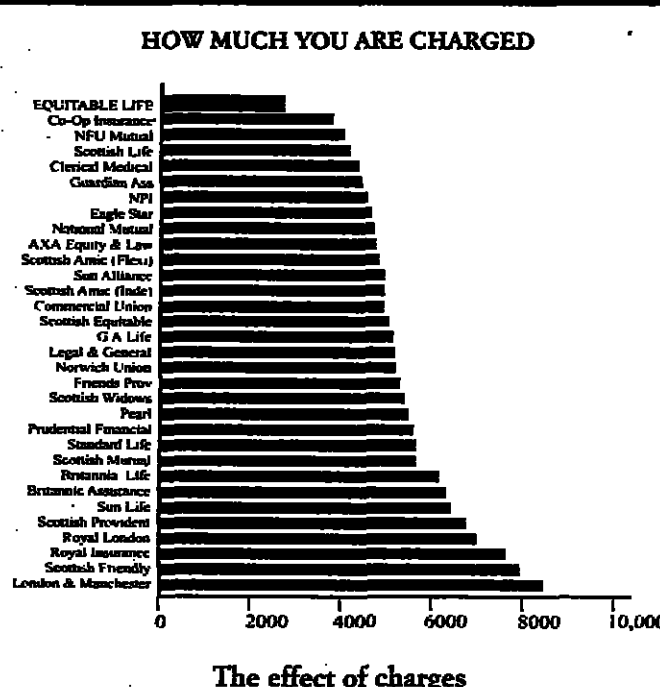
advantage is that it avoids the stigma, and the possible long-lasting disadvantages, of a formal bankruptcy. "An IVA only works if you can show creditors that they would get more than they would from a bankruptcy. If someone is avoiding the disabilities of bankruptcy, they can expect to have to pay more in compensation," says Mr Alexander. Typically, the parties involved will determine how much money the debtor needs to live. Any earnings above that amount are split between the debtor and creditors. This provides an incentive for the debtor to keep earning more while allowing the creditors to benefit from any improvement in the debtor's earnings.

Most IVA arrangements last from three to five years, this is longer than the bankruptcy process, where there is an automatic discharge after three years. They also tend to be more expensive than bankruptcy proceedings. Insolvency practitioner fees are high, starting at £1,500. In comparison, a debtor would pay

£275 to become bankrupt, but would also face solicitor's fees. If the Duchess is unable to reach an agreement, she may have to declare herself bankrupt or her creditors could apply to the court for a bankruptcy order. Once an order is made, an Official Receiver takes control of the estate and arranges for a Trustee to be appointed. The Trustee's job includes selling all the debtor's assets and distributing the cash to creditors. The Duchess could lose all future rights to earnings from her *Budgie the Helicopter* books, as copyright is considered an asset, as well her jewellery and designer gowns.

During the bankruptcy period, the Duchess would be prohibited from a number of occupations including becoming a lawyer, accountant, company director or black cab driver. Nor will she be allowed credit of more than £250 without disclosing her bankrupt status. After three years, these restrictions would be lifted, but her credit rating would be blackened forever.

IF YOU'RE GOING TO BUY A PENSION, MAKE SURE IT'S ONE OF THE BEST ON THE MARKET.



Choosing a personal pension plan is not an easy task. Superficially, many plans can look similar, so what factors should you consider when making your choice?

Price, performance and flexibility are perhaps the key indicators that will enable you to differentiate the wheat from the chaff.

PRICE

New rules came into force this year which require companies to disclose to potential buyers the cost of investments such as personal pension plans. Comparing the charges made by different companies can be quite revealing.

The chart above left compares the effect of the charges made by various companies to recoup such costs as commission, remuneration and administration for a £200 pm, 10 year regular contribution with-profits personal pension plan. Source: Money Management, October 1995.

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MONEY GUIDES

Look out for the second series of *Weekend Money Guides* which will appear on five consecutive weeks, starting next Saturday.

We begin with an A-Z of Personal Finance, explaining everything from the different types of financial advisers to National Savings, the home for £53 billion worth of the nation's cash. In the weeks that follow we will expand on some of the entries, namely, tax-exempt special savings accounts (Tessas), Personal Equity Plans (Peps), Personal Pensions and Tax and Financial Planning. This will tell you how to claim your tax allowances and reliefs in time for the end of the tax year.

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For those who would like independent financial advice, Fidelity products are also available through Independent Financial Advisers.

Mis-sold, opted-out and still uncompensated

One year on, the pensions saga is still unresolved, Caroline Merrell and Marianne Curphy report

Pearl Assurance, one of the UK's biggest insurers, is facing a bill of up to £240 million for paying compensation to policyholders who have been mistakenly advised to opt out of their company pension schemes to take out a Pearl pension.

However, despite the fact the pensions review was announced by regulators more than a year ago, Pearl and many other insurance companies and independent financial advisers have yet to pay out a penny in compensation.

This week, consumer bodies and the Labour Party attacked the Securities and Investments Board for not being harsh enough on those who had missed the year-end deadline for compensating the high priority cases.

Pearl admitted it had found 40,000 opt-out cases, about half of which are high priority. The bill for compensating those who have been mistakenly opted out has been estimated at about £6,000 to £10,000 per case. It has sent out 300,000 letters.

The process for dealing with compensation has been hampered by a number of legal and practical problems.

Other life assurance companies are further ahead with the process. Barclays Life has sent out 145,000 questionnaires. It has isolated 10,000 cases needing further investigation. Of those, 300 have been processed and 160 have received compensation.

Allied Dunbar has sent out 250,000 questionnaires and has compensated about 100 people. It has sent out a total 700,000 letters. The Personal Investment Authority says clients must be sent three reminders.

Brian Shaw, general manager and actuary with Britannic Assurance, said: "The public are reluctant to buy life products and will continue to be so until after the review."

Britannic, which has 200,000 policyholders, has settled a "handful" of cases but



John Malkovich and Dustin Hoffman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*

declined to give a figure for the value of compensation paid out. "We anticipate a lot more cases will be sorted out but there are still many questionnaires which have not been returned," Mr Shaw said.

Legal & General, which has 1.4 million with-profits policyholders and a 3 per cent share of the £11.5 billion personal pensions market, has not released any figures on compensation paid out. A spokesman

said: "It has never been our policy to do so."

Lloyds Abbey Life, which has 250,000 personal pensions holders in Abbey Life and 125,000 in Black Horse Financial Services, said it had made payouts of "several thousands" to a small number of clients.

The Prudential said occupational schemes could refuse to take people back, in which case the life companies would top up their personal pension instead. The Pru has sent out half of the 660,000 questionnaires required with a 70 per cent response. It has not yet paid any compensation, but it believes the process will be completed "towards the end of the year".

The compensation process could be even longer for those who were mis-sold a personal pension by an independent financial adviser (IFA). IFAs have been embroiled in a dispute over their professional indemnity cover, which will ultimately bear the brunt of the compensation bill.

ACTION YOU SHOULD TAKE

If you were sold a personal pension by a representative of a life assurance company, you should have received at least one letter asking about the details of the sale. Do not throw it in the bin in the belief it is just another circular (Caroline Merrell writes).

You may have also received reminders about the questionnaire and if you have ignored them as well, you may have forfeited your right to compensation.

If you were sold a pension by an independent financial adviser (IFA), you may or may not have

received some correspondence. If the IFA which sold you the pension has ceased to exist, then you will not have been contacted. If you think you may be eligible for compensation, ie, if you have transferred, opted out of, or not joined a company pension scheme on the advice of a defunct IFA, contact the Personal Investment Authority.

Finally, you have the right to go to court if you think you have been mis-sold a pension.

The address of the PIA is: *The address of the PIA is: Heron House, Heron Road, B14 4AB.*

Cut in base rate brings no joy for borrowers

THIS week's 0.25 per cent cut in base rates is unlikely to lead to further reductions in the mortgage rate. The drop in rates to 6.25 per cent had been widely anticipated and the UK's biggest lenders pointed out that they had already cut rates in anticipation of the move. As a result, the mortgage rate will remain unchanged at 7.49 per cent.

On the other hand, the rate for millions of savers was cut this week. The Halifax cut its rates by 0.55 per cent on average. A sum of £5,000 in its instant access account now earns 3.25 per cent gross, down from 3.85 per cent. Nationwide cut rates by 0.44 per cent — its instant access account will now pay 3.2 per cent interest gross.

Halifax, Abbey National and the Woolwich were among the first to announce that they did not anticipate cutting mortgage rates.

A Halifax spokeswoman said: "We moved to cut the rate in November by 0.25 per cent cut it again by 0.25 per cent in December. We do not plan any further moves in the mortgage rate." A Woolwich spokesman said: "Our mortgage rate will remain at 7.49 per cent. This cut had already been anticipated. We will continue to keep our rates under review to make sure our savers and borrowers are not disadvantaged."

Base rates have been cut by 0.5 per cent over the past twelve months. Rates were cut in February last year to 6.75 per cent, they were cut again in December to 6.5 per cent, and were finally cut again this Thursday to 6.25 per cent. In comparison mortgage rates were cut from 8.4 per cent to 7.99 per cent in September, with another cut to 7.74 per cent in November, and a final cut to 7.49 per cent in December.

A mortgage rate of 7.49 per cent means that a someone with a £60,000 repayment mortgage will pay £420.09, while someone with an endowment mortgage will pay £346.43.

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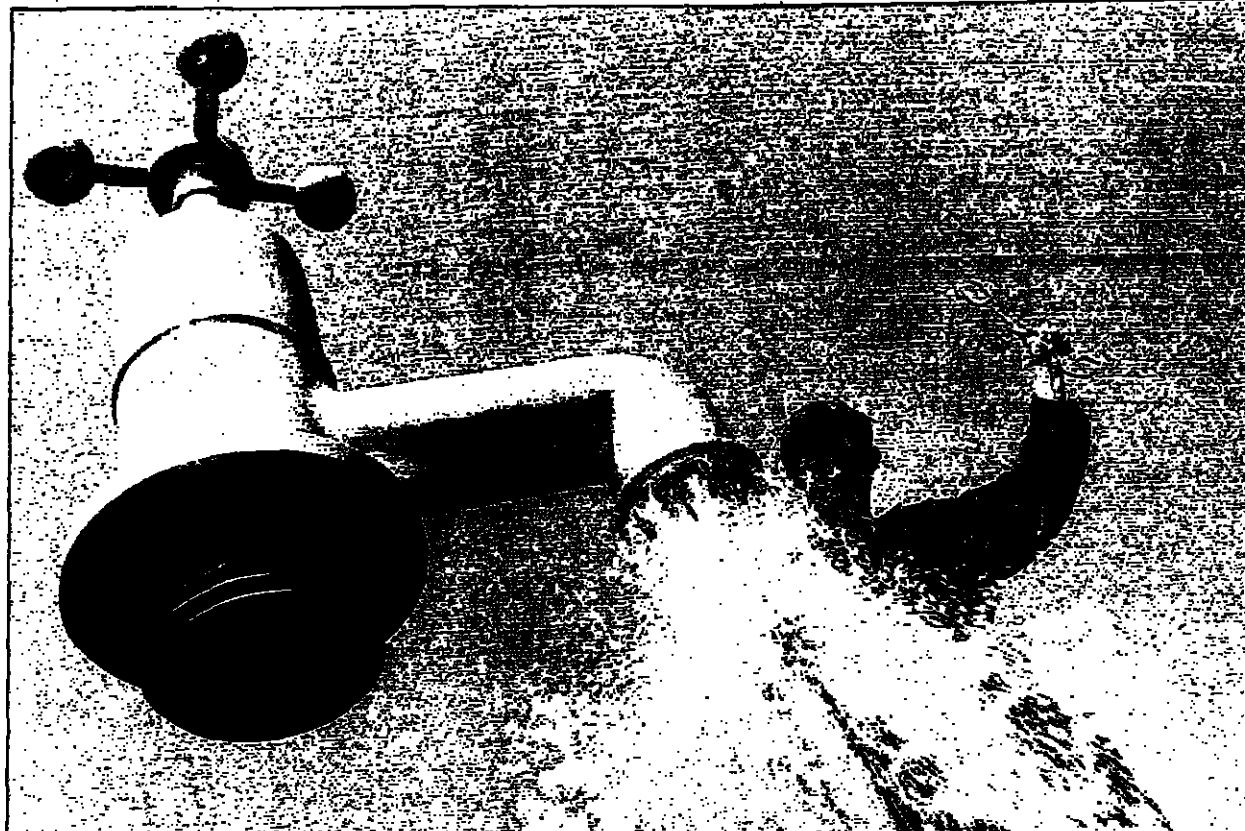
WEEKEND MONEY

PRIVATISATION SPECIAL

The clock is now ticking for shareholders in PowerGen and National Power who have until February 6 to decide whether to pay the second instalment on their part-paid shares, or to sell. This week we look at how the two power generators have performed compared with the other privatised utilities and with what else the Government may be hoping to tempt investors.

Q How have PowerGen and National Power fully paid shares performed?

A PowerGen and National Power first came to the market in 1991 when the Government sold a 60 percent stake in each. Both were floated at an initial price of 175p, payable in two parts. At current levels the shares have risen by 197 per cent for PowerGen and 151 per cent for National Power, but well behind the regional electricity



Water companies are becoming a turn-off for investors as huge new capital programmes make takeovers unlikely

companies leading the table. Looking at dividend performance however the picture is different. According to Nigel Hawkins, analyst at Yamaichi Bank, taking 1995 dividend payments together with forecast payments through to 1997, the power generators are amongst the top performers.

PowerGen shows a 47 per cent increase and National Power is up 36 per cent.

Q How have the shares of the other privatised utilities performed?

A Investors who have followed each of the

privatisations from British Telecom in 1984 will have seen the best returns from the 12 regional electricity companies which floated in 1990. Money invested in the ten water authorities privatised in 1989 have seen solid, but less spectacular, increases. Water companies are less attractive

takeover targets with their commitment to large capital investment programmes making them an expensive purchase. The only takeover exception to date is the Lyonnais des Eaux bid for Northumbrian Water which has boosted the latter's share performance. Wessex Water and

Southern are tipped as possible bid targets, which will help to keep their shares buoyant, but for the sector overall, popularity with investors has suffered as a result of problems caused by drought and burst pipes, together with the threat to the windfall tax under a Labour government.

Near the bottom of the performance table comes British Gas, privatised in 1986. The increase in share price from 135p at flotation to present levels around 250p leaves it way behind the Recs. As British Gas undergoes its major restructuring ahead of increased competition in the market and copes with the costly problem of excess supply against demand, the prospect of a flat, or even a reduced, dividend is unlikely to thrill investors.

Q What other privatisations are coming to the market?

A The Government has two lined up for 1996. First will be Railtrack. Around one third of the issue, expected to value Railtrack at up to £2.5bn, is earmarked for the public with the promise of discounts or bonus shares. Details are expected in March. This summer is the expected date of the British Energy privatisation. It is expected part of the issue will be set aside for the public, though details have yet to be finalised.

CLARE STEWART

Bond that blooms with FT-SE

Miserable as the garden looks at this time of year, Sun Alliance is hoping to attract investors with a new series of floral products. First off is the Rose Bond.

The name may be new but the product is a standard guaranteed investment bond. When you buy a bond you give a lump sum to the bond provider, usually a life assurance company, which invests your money, together with that of thousands of other investors, in stocks and shares and government securities.

The company in this case is Phoenix Assurance, which is owned by Sun Alliance and operates Sun Alliance's direct sales arm. The bit that is guaranteed in this bond is a

full refund at the end of five years of your initial investment, with a return of at least 17 per cent. That works out at a guaranteed return of 3.2 per cent net a year. The bond will also pay the equivalent of the growth in the FT-SE 100 index, based on the average value of the index over the past 12 months of the policy. Sun Alliance says that recent past performance of the FT-SE 100 indicates an average return of 51.6 per cent. If that happens over the next five years, you would be getting an average

annual return of 9 per cent. The return from bonds at the end of their term is paid after the deduction of basic rate income tax, which cannot be reclaimed if you are a non-taxpayer. If you are a higher rate taxpayer at the time there will be an additional tax charge.

The bond should be seen as a five-year investment. If you surrender the policy before the term is up you may not get back all your initial investment. Minimum investment is £5,000. "This bond has a strange concept," says Mark

Bolland of Chamberlain de Broe, financial advisers. "It is tempting savers with an investors' product. The guaranteed return is not any better than you would get in a building society. So, like it or not, you are relying on the stock market to do well and give you better returns. And if you believe the stock market is going to go up, then why not invest in it directly?"

The appeal of the Rose Bond would be its guarantee that the initial investment is safe. But, says Mark Bolland, you have to pay for that security. Marks out of ten? "I can see the appeal of the guarantee but I can't get excited about it. So five out of ten."

SARAH JONES



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Tessa cash tempts the trust managers

Caroline Merrell looks at the new investment trust products

Over the next few weeks some of the UK's biggest fund managers are planning to test the water and launch investment trusts which they hope will have their surfing the crest of the estimated £21 billion Tessa pay-out. Among them are Perpetual, M&G and Flemings, while Schroders is launching a Pep based on its Schroder Growth Investment trust.

As well as trying to attract money from maturing Tessa, the investment houses are hoping to ride the crest of the continuing rise in the UK stock market. Over the last year, the market rose by about 19 per cent. Some believe this bull market will continue this year.

Perpetual will begin to offer its trust to the public on February 20. It is one of the UK's biggest fund managers, and has collected nearly every possible performance accolade over the last few years. Many of its unit trusts have continually outperformed their respective indices, as well as the more average trusts.

The new income and growth investment trust, structured to take up to £1 billion, will be managed by Neil Woodford, who manages Perpetual's high-income unit trust and its income unit trust. Its high-income unit trust has risen 243 per cent since its 1988 launch, comfortably outstripping the rise in the FTA all-share index and the sector average. Its income fund has risen 138 per cent over the past five years, again much higher than the index and market average.

Perpetual's investment trust is being launched at the same time as an equivalent trust from its arch-rival M&G. Both trusts will aim to achieve a



Splashing out: Fund managers hope to surf the crest of the £21 billion Tessa payout wave

high yield — 4.4 per cent in M&G's case and 4 per cent in Perpetual's case. Both trusts are peppable, offer savings plans and are capped at £1 billion. But charging structures contrast dramatically. M&G's fund will carry no initial charge, nor will it carry an exit charge. Anyone buying shares in the trust will only have to pay an annual management charge of 1.25 per cent plus VAT. It is set for launch in February. Perpetual's fund will carry an initial charge of around 4.5 per cent, while its annual management charge will be 0.75 per cent.

Flemings is putting the finishing touches to an investment trust aimed at paying income of 9.6 per cent. Daniel Godfrey, Flemings director said: "This level of income cannot be attained without some cost to capital growth."

Schroders will offer a Pep linked to its UK growth investment trust. This fund has risen by about 18 per cent since launch in March last year. That Pep will be available between February 6 and 29. John Spiers, managing director of Best Investment, said:

"We have no problem with recommending Perpetual as a company. That being said we are a little bit sceptical about the fact about the possible £1 billion size of the fund. Shares in the similar-sized European privatisation fund from Kleinwort Benson are now trading at a discount."

He also questions the use of an investment trust for those who buy Peps every year. Anyone who does this will have a portfolio which is heavily geared towards the UK. He said: "If at some point in the future you want to rebalance your portfolio, it is much harder and more expensive to

switch around your investments if you have an investment trust." He would not be recommending Perpetual's trust because the current levels of the UK stockmarket meant there was better value to be had by investing elsewhere.

Graham Hooper, Chase de Vere investment director, said: "The charges on the Perpetual Pep are average, but I'm a great admirer of the abilities of Neil Woodford."

He added that the sheer size of money Mr Woodford had to manage could impede the trust's performance. He also believes the 4.4 per cent yield target set by M&G could be quite hard to achieve in the current market conditions.

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WEEKEND MONEY GUIDE

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More than six million people buy private medical insurance every year, but many are unaware of just what their policy covers them for.

Few have the time or the facilities to compare the vast array of plans on the market to find the one that suits them best, and some may have been persuaded to transfer policies by a sales agent keen to maximise commission.

So how can you tell if your medical insurance is good value? Within the next few months the Office of Fair Trading is to make public its investigation into this burgeoning, unregulated industry. The report is expected to criticise the obscure clauses and exclusions in policies which leave consumers with a

great deal less cover than they imagined. It is also expected to rule on mis-selling, and in particular the practice of "churning" — where a sales agent advises a policy holder to switch to a different insurer in order to generate further commission.

This could be particularly bad news for someone undergoing treatment when the policy is changed as many insurers will not pay for treating a medical condition either known or suspected before the policy was taken out.

Well over half of all medical insurance is sold direct by sales agents or through advertising, and since health insurance premiums in the UK are now worth about £1.5 billion annually, and sales commission is typically 10 per cent of the yearly premium, agents can make a lot of money from selling such products.

An estimated 11 per cent of the population has paid for cover, but as the percentage of elderly people in the population rises by an estimated 50 per cent within the next 35 years, demand will grow.

Legal & General, the life, pensions and investments house, this week launched its £10 million Lifetime Healthcare Plan.

Which? the magazine of the Consumer's Association, gives warning that private medical

insurance is still "a luxury purchase", and says free medical treatment is available on the NHS, though you may have to wait for it. Figures

from the Department of Health for the number of people on NHS waiting lists vary according to region and health authority. For the three



BILL SANDERSON

maternity benefits and breast cancer treatment.

Ohra, a Dutch company, and Prime Health, offer a wide range of benefits for a relatively low premium, she says.

Barbara Butterworth, of King Street Financial Services, Manchester says Bupa, Prime Health and Johnson Fry (of London) are worth considering.

For the over-50s Prime Health, part of Standard Life, is good value.

Private medical insurance only pays for acute conditions that can be cured, by an operation or short-term course of treatment, not emergency treatment, long-term or incurable illnesses.

Medical plans for the over-60s cover the 60 to 75 age range and offer basic-rate tax relief on premiums. Few insurers will welcome you as a first-time customer over 75, though your existing insurer might quote you a personal rate. The ones that do include Cumbria-based UAP (formerly Provincial), which allows you to join up to the age of 79 and Norwich Union, which charges a single person over 75 a monthly fee of £84.85 for the most basic cover.

Policies are either underwritten — these will require you to give your full medical history and the insurer may exclude some treatments — or they contain a moratorium clause. In the case of the latter, do not need to disclose your medical history, but all pre-existing conditions are excluded for an average two years.

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Hysterectomy	£3,000-£4,000

Source: Which?

cies cover the cost of maternity care. Even then, the cash benefit is usually for expenses after live births only.

Which? says there is usually no financial benefit in taking out PMI when young, because premiums rise with age, regardless of when you joined.

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TIM 20/1/96

4 out of 6 funds are in the top 25% of their sectors for their performance over 5 years. Positions are to 1st January 1996 and are on an offer-to-offer US Dollar basis, inclusive of reinvested income, net of withholding taxes (source: Micropal). Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. The value of an investment and the income from it can go down as well as up (this may partly be a result of exchange rate fluctuations) and you may not get back the amount invested.

05:10:11 AM

Morag Preston seeks financial advice on saving for the big one

Paying for the party of the millennium



Doing it in style: British Airways is considering auctioning Concorde for charity. Lucky passengers will be able to see in the new year twice, both in London and New York — but the privileged few will probably have to pay a stiff price

Not to be outdone by Virginia Bottomley and the Millennium Commission, far-sighted party organisers are laying their own foundations for New Year's Eve 1999.

The Albert Hall has been booked since 1975, the Savoy has enough bookings to fill it twice over, and revellers are already beginning to stake their place in Claridge's. Madame Tussaud's and the QE2 are taken, and an order for 5,000 bottles of vintage champagne has fuelled rumours that stocks could run out.

After a rush of interest, British Airways is considering auctioning Concorde for charity. Lucky passengers will be able to see in the new year twice, both in London and New York, but chartering the moveable feast does not come cheap at £5,600 per seat for the return journey.

Intent on making a profit, people are even reserving venues to sell on to the highest bidder at the last minute, while others plan to sell tickets to private parties at unique sites. William Deakin, director of Juliana's party designers, expects to take £500 a head for millennium parties. "If you want the best location, you need to book now," he says.

But securing the best venue is only half the problem. First, there is the consideration of cost. June Torrano, 59, from Portsmouth, wrote to Weekend Money in search of a savings scheme to make New Year's Eve 1999 a memorable event for her and 49 friends. She says: "We don't want to end up sitting in front of the television at home. I thought if we start saving now, we could look forward to a party in a London hotel and maybe even

spend the night." Friends and family of Mrs Torrano have agreed to pay £10 a month each into a savings scheme. "People will be coming from all over. We're going to put forward ideas, then put it to the vote," she says. "We need a flexible scheme in case anyone has to drop out. And I don't want to be the problem of collecting the money."

To help them celebrate in style, Weekend Money asked financial advisers where to invest £500 a month.

Justin Urquhart Stewart, Barclays: "For like-minded people, who don't know much about investment and only want to put in a small amount of money, they should set up two or three

trusts, making it clear that anyone who leaves will receive one-fifth of the trust assets at that time. They should put £300 into a broadly spread investment trust savings scheme, like Foreign & Colonial, and start coming out of it after two or three years. The balance should be kept in a bank or building society that accepts trust money, and one that is likely to be taken over. If interest rates start going up, they could buy a zero dividend preference share, like the City of Oxford Preference Share, which will pay out just before December 1999."

Philippe Gee, Gee & Co: "The Alliance & Leicester offers a Prime Deposit account for clubs with a current inter-

al monthly investment of £20-£30 per month. Investment clubs are restricted to groups of 20, otherwise they must set up as a limited company with all the costs and responsibilities this would incur."

Brian Connell, Grant Thornton: "As protection of capital is important, I recommend remaining in cash. The equity market could achieve better results, but success cannot be guaranteed. Establish a bank or building society account with participants contributing monthly by standing order. Generally, club accounts attract lower interest rates. The Halifax Treasurer's account pays 4.3 and 4.85 per cent per annum gross. A cheque account may be useful to meet stage payments, but rates may be lower. You also need to check transaction charges. Robert Fleming/Save & Prosper pays 4.67 per cent on its corporate account with more than £5,000. Should there be a solicitor or an accountant among the guests, they may be persuaded to use their firm's Client account. Bristol & West client's account pays 5.937 per cent gross annually."

John Easton, Lupton Fawcett: "Look at a collective investment vehicle, such as a unit or investment trust. They offer flexibility of contributions, with no pre-determined investment period, and an equity base for future potential growth. They give professional management, a wide spread of investments, and almost immediate access. A regular investment of £500 per month would give pound-cost averaging, smoothing out stock market fluctuations."

Fine wines and champagne will be very much in demand — buy now

investment clubs. They have every opportunity to make quite a lot of money from smaller companies associated with the millennium — anything from fizzy drinks to high-tech growth. They should set up a standing order with a bank account, and buy shares in the name of the club. Shares are easily tradeable, and people have a knowledge of which supermarkets are doing well without going to an advisory service. Interest will accumulate as dividends are paid into their account, which will allow them to buy more shares."

Mark Bolland, Chamberlain De Broe: "They should appoint four trustees and set up an absolute

est rate of 3.4 per cent gross on a deposit of £500. Standing orders are allowed into the account, so this could be used as a low risk investment. Up to three signatures would be allowed with the account, registered in the name of the club. "Fine wines and champagne will be very much in demand for the millennium. Buy cases now, and sell them nearer the time to wine merchants or take them to an auction. This offers the possibility of growth, while allowing part of the investment to be retained for the club's own party. Consider this for initial investment only, and set up a club nominee account with a stockbroker for trading shares, like Sharelink. An initial investment is usually required followed by a typic-



Mrs June Torrano, with grandchildren Lucy and Andrew, started the ball rolling with a request to Weekend Money

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THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

Barclays boosts overdraft benefits

Barclays is revitalising the way it provides its personal customers with overdrafts. Once a current account holder has agreed his overdraft limit with Barclays, overdrafts will be available on an on-going basis without an expiry date, similar to credit card limits. Existing customers will automatically benefit from the change as their overdraft will no longer need to be renewed. This new permanent limit follows recent improvements to Barclays' current account service, which include the two-day fee-free period for customers accidentally overdrawn.

Thousands of people are logging on to the Internet each month and many are using it to buy and sell shares. But according to Redmayne-Bentley, the solicitor, the Internet's potential for the active investor lies in the provision of readily accessible information, rather than on-line dealing, which still has many practical and security concerns. The firm of solicitors is offering a wide range of services over the Internet, including market comment, advisory, investment services and Execution Only-PLUS, which enables them on-line to discuss investment ideas with quali-

fied professionals before taking decisions. Redmayne's Internet address is <http://www.redmayne.co.uk/redmayne/>. Details: 0113 2436941.

After the Bank of England's base rate reduction, the interest rate on the base-rate linked credit card issued by Flemings/Save & Prosper, the investment company, has fallen to 0.94 per cent per month from 0.96 per cent per month. This means that only £100 will now be charged yearly borrowing £1,000 for a year, a difference of over £100 per annum compared with both Midland Access and NatWest Visa rates, which will cost a customer £220.43 and £231.37 respectively. For further details, call Flemings/Save & Prosper on 0800 829400.

A guide to the Enterprise Investment Scheme has been published by Matrix Securities. It outlines the background to the EIS, summarises current rules and explains the principal tax reliefs available. Copies of EIS are simple available from Matrix Securities Ltd, Gosport House, 7-8 Savile Row, London W1X 1AF.

LIZANNE ROSE

ANNUAL INCOME

Rates as at January 17, 1996

Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)
1 Year		
5,000	AIG Life	4.95
10,000	AIG Life	5.05
20,000	AIG Life	5.15
50,000	AIG Life	5.30
2 Years		
5,000	AIG Life	5.18
10,000	AIG Life	5.28
20,000	AIG Life	5.43
50,000	AIG Life	5.58
3 Years		
1,000	Pennine Life	4.90
5,000	Financial Assur	5.20
20,000	Financial Assur	5.30
50,000	Financial Assur	5.40
4 Years		
1,000	Pennine Life	5.40
20,000	Financial Assur	5.50
50,000	Financial Assur	5.60
5 Years		
1,000	Pennine Life	5.80
3,000	Pennine Life	6.51
10,000	Pennine Life	6.61
50,000	Pennine Life	6.71

Source: Chamberlain & Birk (011 454 4222). Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Teachers BS 0800 378669	Instant	£500	5.70	4.75
Bristol & West BS 0800 303330	Instant	£5,000	5.75	5.75
Manchester BS 0161 839 5545	Instant	£25,000	6.25	6.25
Skipton BS 01756 700511	Instant	£30,000	6.50	6.50

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Teachers BS 0116 9481444	Instant	£2,500	5.75	5.75
Cheltenham & Gloucester 0800 717505	Instant	£1,000	5.75	5.75
Cheltenham & Gloucester 0800 717505	Instant	£10,000	5.75	5.75
Cheltenham & Gloucester 0800 717505	Instant	£25,000	7.10	7.10

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Alfred Trust Bank 0171 626 0879	Instant	£9,000	7.50	7.50
Sun Bank 01438 744505	Instant	£9,575	7.25	7.25
Cheltenham & Gloucester 0800 717505	Instant	£9,500	7.25	7.25
Cheltenham & Gloucester 01222 341186	Instant	£25	7.25	7.25

Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Robert Fleming/S&P 0800 829024	Instant	£100,000	12.00%	12.00%
Royal Bank of Scotland 0800 161616	Instant	£100,000	14.00%	14.00%
Fitzell Bank 0800 373191	Instant	£100,000	18.00%	18.00%

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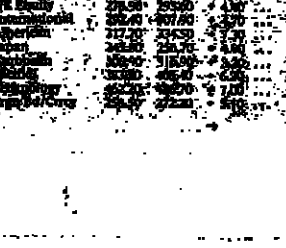
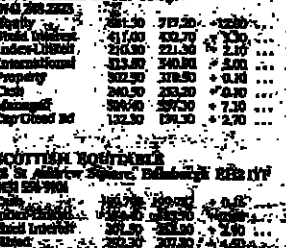
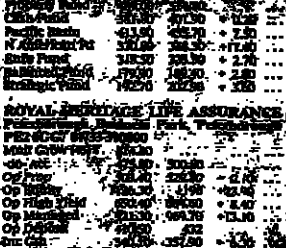
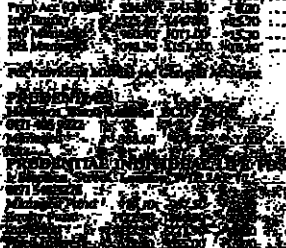
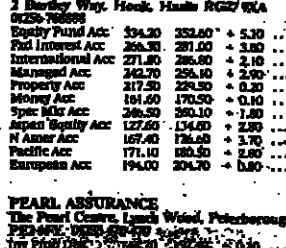
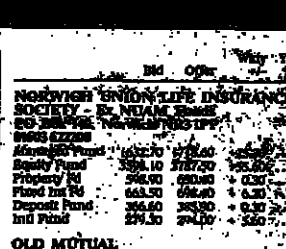
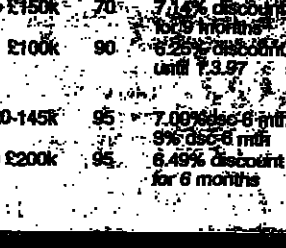
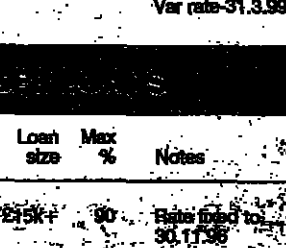
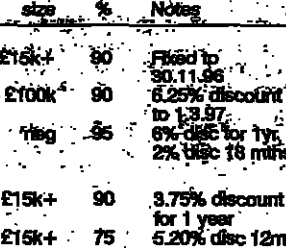
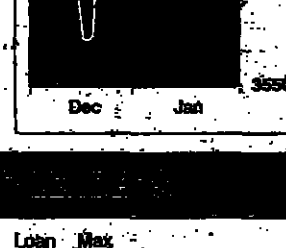
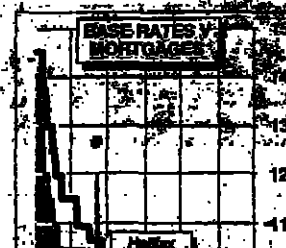
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Sara McConnell finds leases cost less if you cannot trace the landlord

When absence helps

Hundreds of despairing flat tenants who cannot trace their landlords to serve notice that they want to buy the freehold of their block have been besieging the government-funded Leasehold Enfranchisement Advisory Service (Leas). They fear that they will be trapped in properties that are unsaleable because there is no freeholder.

But the Leas is telling them they could be in a stronger position than leaseholders with landlords intent on putting obstacles in the way of tenants wanting to exercise their right to buy the freehold and manage their own flats.

The Government was this week forced to promise amendments to existing landlord and tenant legislation in the forthcoming Housing Bill after recent revelations of growing abuse of leaseholders' rights by some landlords. But campaigners fear landlords will be able to find new ways of evading the law. By contrast, leaseholders with absentee landlords can succeed in buying their freehold relatively easily and possibly more cheaply, says the Leas.

There are two main routes, depending on circumstances. ☐ You cannot contact your landlord. Letters or cheques are returned and insurance cover is not renewed. You know his company still exists because you have checked at Companies House. He is still the listed freeholder at the Land Registry so he has not sold it to someone else. But you



Samantha Dukes, left, David Cleland and Sara McConnell after buying their freehold

cannot reach him at the address you have and neither can anyone else.

Under the 1993 Leasehold Reform Act, you can approach the county court directly. As long as the court is satisfied that you have really made an effort to find your landlord and that you qualify to buy your freehold under the Act, it will allow you to buy, then ask the leasehold valuation tribunal to set a price. You have avoided lengthy battles with your landlord over your right to buy the freehold.

☐ Your landlord's company has been struck off by Com-

panies House because it has failed to file accounts. Alternatively, the company has gone into liquidation and then been dissolved. But you can still buy the freehold. Try to find out whether your company is still registered as landlord. The Land Registry, now open to the public, will hold information on your landlord if the title is registered.

You should then contact the Treasury Solicitor, who acts on behalf of the Crown. Assets owned by dissolved companies (including freehold property) pass automatically to the Crown. The Treasury

Solicitor has a duty to investigate whether there were claims against the company when it was dissolved.

Depending on the result of its investigations, the Treasury Solicitor may then be able to transfer the freehold directly to a company set up and owned by you and your fellow tenants. Officials at the Treasury Solicitor's department say they are always prepared to tell you if this is feasible. The freehold and costs are generally fairly priced to encourage a straightforward purchase. *Leas: 0171 493 3116.*

Diary of a freehold purchase

1994 JAN The buildings insurance comes up for renewal on our four-flat conversion in Blackheath, South London. Normally our freeholder, a company called Alphatrend, via its managing agent Brian Nicholls of Nicholls and Co., solicitors, pays it. In 1993 it was not paid until June. This year, Alphatrend's insurance brokers cannot contact him. They ask if we would arrange the insurance and we agree. Mr Nicholls has been difficult to reach in the past year and we have no address for Alphatrend. We have not had bills for ground rent or service charges since 1992. We discover the freehold was sold to Alphatrend in 1990 without being offered to us and that Alphatrend was struck off and dissolved in July 1993. I volunteer my solicitor to find Mr Nicholls to try to buy the freehold.

1994 MAR Our solicitor discovers Alphatrend has never been registered as the freeholder at the Land Registry and has had no success in contacting Mr

Nicholls. Without him we have no way of knowing where our property files are.

1994 JUL Our solicitor is made redundant but we find our files at a firm of solicitors ordered to take over Mr Nicholls' business by the Law Society. The files confirm Alphatrend's demise and the freehold transfer to Alphatrend for £1,000. Our house was an Alphatrend asset at the transfer. Though never registered at the Land Registry, our new solicitor says the transfer is almost certainly legal. The files confirm what we had already suspected — that Mr Nicholls and Alphatrend were one and the same. With Alphatrend gone, the freehold has passed to the Crown. The question is now whether the Crown will agree to sell us the freehold directly or whether we have to have Alphatrend restored to the company register so that we can pay it the ground rent we technically owe (though were never billed for) in then serve notices on it to buy the freehold. Restoration could cost £5,000 before even starting to buy the freehold.

1994 NOV We discover we almost certainly do not need to restore Alphatrend. The Treasury Solicitor, for the Crown, tells us we may be able to buy the freehold directly. We do not have to follow procedures set out in the Leasehold and Urban Development Act 1993. Now we need the Crown to agree that it is the freeholder.

1995 FEB The Crown confirms that the freehold of our house has now passed into its possession and it is currently considering transferring the freehold to us directly.

1995 MAR The Treasury Solicitor, on behalf of the Crown, offers us the freehold of our house for £4,000 (10 times the annual ground rent), plus costs of £250 plus VAT. We accept with relief. We will form our own management company with ourselves as the company's shareholders.

1995 JUL Our solicitor advises asking the Treasury Solicitor to register himself as the freeholder at the Land Registry before transferring the freehold to us. There is still a fear that Mr Nicholls could reappear and claim ownership of the freehold. Mr Nicholls's failure to register the transfer has complicated the whole process.

1995 OCT We finally receive the documents to sign transferring the freehold from the Treasury Solicitor to us. At the same time the Treasury Solicitor registers at the Land Registry as the freeholder so he can transfer ownership to us.

1995 NOV We pay over the money. The whole process, including solicitors' fees and setting up a management company has cost us £1,356 each and has taken almost two years.

SARA MCCONNELL

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THE TIMES SATURDAY JANUARY 20 1996

ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

Equities pause for breath

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2108	2109	2110	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2116	2117	2118	2119	2120	2121	2122	2123	2124	2125	2126	2127	2128	2129	2130	2131	2132	2133	2134	2135	2136	2137	2138	2139	2140	2141	2142	2143	2144	2145	2146	2147	2148	2149	2150	2151	2152	2153	2154	2155	2156	2157	2158	2159	2160	2161	2162	2163	2164	2165	2166	2167	2168	2169	2170	2171	2172	2173	2174	2175	2176	2177	2178	2179	2180	2181	2182	2183	2184	2185	2186	2187	2188	2189	2190	2191	2192	2193	2194	2195	2196	2197	2198	2199	2200	2201	2202	2203	2204	2205	2206	2207	2208	2209	2210	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215	2216	2217	2218	2219	2220	2221	2222	2223	2224	2225	2226	2227	2228	2229	2230	2231	2232	2233	2234	2235	2236	2237	2238	2239	2240	2241	2242	2243	2244	2245	2246	2247	2248	2249	2250	2251	2252	2253	2254	2255	2256	2257	2258	2259	2260	2261	2262	2263	2264	2265	2266	2267	2268	2269	2270	2271	2272	2273	2274	2275	2276	2277	2278	2279	2280	2281	2282	2283	2284	2285	2286	2287	2288	2289	2290	2291	2292	2293	2294	2295	2296	2297	2298	2299	2300	2301	2302	2303	2304	2305	2306	2307	2308	2309	2310	2311	2312	2313	2314	2315	2316	2317	2318	2319	2320	2321	2322	2323	2324	2325	2326	2327	2328	2329	2330	2331	2332	2333	2334	2335	2336	2337	2338	2339	2340	2341	2342	2343	2344	2345	2346	2347	2348	2349	2350	2351	2352	2353	2354	2355	2356	2357	2358	2359	2360	2361	2362	2363	2364	2365	2366	2367	2368	2369	2370	2371	2372	2373	2374	2375	2376	2377	2378	2379	2380	2381	2382	2383	2384	2385	2386	2387	2388	2389	2390	2391	2392	2393	2394	2395	2396	2397	2398	2399	2400	2401	2402	2403	2404	2405	2406	2407	2408	2409	2410	2411	2412	2413	2414	2415	2416	2417	2418	2419	2420	2421	2422	2423	2424	2425	2426	2427	2428	2429	2430	2431	2432	2433	2434	2435	2436	2437	2438	2439	2440	2441	2442	2443	2444	2445	2446	2447	2448	2449	2450	2451	2452	2453	2454	2455	2456	2457	2458	2459	2460	2461	2462	2463	2464	2465	2466	2467	2468	2469	2470	2471	2472	2473	2474	2475	2476	2477	2478	2479	2480	2481	2482	2483	2484	2485	2486	2487	2488	2489	2490	2491	2492	2493	2494	2495	2496	2497	2498	2499	2500	2501	2502	2503	2504	2505	2506	2507	2508	2509	2510	2511	2512	2513	2514	2515	2516	2517	2518	2519	2520	2521	2522	2523	2524	2525	2526	2527	2528	2529	2530	2531	2532	2533	2534	2535	2536	2537	2538	2539	2540	2541	2542	2543	2544	2545	2546	2547	2548	2549	2550	2551	2552	2553	2554	2555	2556	2557	2558	2559	2560	2561	2562	2563	2564	2565	2566	2567	2568	2569	2570	2571	2572	2573	2574	2575	2576	2577	2578	2579	2580	2581	2582	2583	2584	2585	2586	2587	2588	2589	2590	2591	2592	2593	2594	2595	2596	2597	2598	2599	2600	2601	2602	2603	2604	2605	2606	2607	2608	2609	2610	2611	2612	2613	2614	2615	2616	2617	2618	2619	2620	2621	2622	2623	2624	2625	2626	2627	2628	2629	2630	2631	2632	2633	2634	2635	2636	2637	2638	2639	2640	2641	2642	2643	2644	2645	2646	2647	2648	2649	2650	2651	2652	2653	2654	2655	2656	2657	2658	2659	2660	2661	2662	2663	2664	2665	2666	2667	2668	2669	2670	2671	2672	2673	2674	2675	2676	2677	2678	2679	2680	2681	2682	2683	2684	2685	2686	2687	2688	2689	2690	2691	2692	2693	2694	2695	2696	2697	2698	2699	2700	2701	2702	2703	2704	2705	2706	2707	2708	2709	2710	2711	2712	2713	2714	2715	2716	2717	2718	2719	2720	2721	2722	2723	2724	2725	2726	2727	2728	2729	2730	2731	2732	2733	2734	2735	2736	2737	2738	2739	2740	2741	2742	2743	2744	2745	2746	2747	2748	2749	2750	2751	2752	2753	2754	2755	2756	2757	2758	2759	2760	2761	2762	2763	2764	2765	2766	2767	2768	2769	2770	2771	2772	2773	2774	2775	2776	2777	2778	2779	2780	2781	2782	2783	2784	2785	2786	2787	2788	2789	2790	2791	2792	2793	2794	2795	2796	2797	2798	2799	2800	2801	2802	2803	2804	2805	2806	2807	2808	2809	2810	2811	2812	2813	2814	2815	2816	2817	2818	2819	2820	2821	2822	2823	2824	2825	2826	2827	2828	2829	2830	2831	2832	2833	2834	2835	2836	2837	2838	2839	2840	2841	2842	2843	2844	2845	2846	2847	2848	2849	2850	2851	2852	2853	2854	2855	2856	2857	2858	2859	2860	2861	2862	2863	2864	2865	2866	2867	2868	2869	2870	2871	2872	2873	2874	2875	2876	2877	2878	2879	2880	2881	2882	2883	2884	2885	2886	2887	2888	2889	2890	2891	2892	2893	2894	2895	2896	2897	2898	2899	2900	2901	2902	2903	2904	2905	2906	2907	2908	2909	2910	2911	2912	2913	2914	2915	2916	2917	2918	2919	2920	2921	2922	2923	2924	2925	2926	2927	2928	2929	2930	2931	2932	2933	2934	2935	2936	2937	2938	2939	2940	2941	2942	2943	2944	2945	2946	2947	2948	2949	2950	2951	2952	2953	2954	2955	2956	2957	2958	2959	2960	2961	2962	2963	2964	2965	2966	2967	2968	2969	2970	2971	2972	2973	2974	2975	2976	2977	2978	2979	2980	2981	2982	2983	2984	2985	2986	2987	2988	2989	2990	2991	2992	2993	2994	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BY RUSSELL KEMPSON AND DAVID MADDOCK



the most impressive this country has witnessed for a long, long time.

Good news for English football, but on the other hand England have

Manchester City's fixture with Coventry City today is a relegation tussle of significance, even at this relatively early stage in the season. But the home supporters can at least take heart from the form of a player who is now their undisputed champion.

WHEN TO WATCH ON TELEVISION

Today

10:45pm BBC 1 Match of the Day (highlights)

Tonorrow

12 noon Sky Sports Goals on Sunday

3:00pm Sky Sports First Extra League Sunday
Auton Vile v Fulham (Sky Network) (HS)

Monday

10:45pm BBC 1 Match of the Day (highlights)

Tuesday

10:45pm BBC 1 Match of the Day (highlights)

Wednesday

10:45pm BBC 1 Match of the Day (highlights)

Thursday

10:45pm BBC 1 Match of the Day (highlights)

Friday

10:45pm BBC 1 Match of the Day (highlights)

Saturday

10:45pm BBC 1 Match of the Day (highlights)

	P	Pls	Goal diff	Recent form
1 Newcastle	22	51	+25	WWLWW
2 Manchester Utd	23	42	+14	LWLWD
3 Tottenham	23	41	+10	DDLWW
4 Liverpool	22	39	+20	WWWDW
5 Arsenal	23	37	+9	LWLWL
6 Nottingham Forest	22	37	+2	LWWLW
7 Aston Villa	21	36	+12	DWLWD
8 Blackburn	23	35	+8	DWWDW
9 Leeds	22	35	+3	WWLWD
10 Everton	23	33	+8	LWLWD
11 Middlesbrough	23	33	+1	WLWL
12 Chelsea	23	33	-1	WLWDW
13 Sheffield Wed.	22	28	0	WLWDW
14 West Ham	21	23	-10	LWLWL
15 Wimbledon	23	21	-14	DWWLL
16 Southampton	22	20	-12	LDLWL
17 Coventry	22	19	-16	LWLWL
18 Manchester City	22	19	-20	DLWLW
19 QPR	23	19	-17	WLWL
20 Bolton	23	19	-22	DLLWL

Today	10:45pm BBC 1 Match of the Day (nighttime)
Tomorrow	12 noon Sky Sports Goals on Sunday 5:00pm Sky Sports First Extra & Super Sunday Auton Villa v Tottenham Hotspur (live)
Monday	7:00pm Sky Sports Goals on Monday (nighttime)

River North fades out of Cheltenham contention

Karshi helps cheer the Vestey's

By JULIAN MURRAY

NATIONAL HUNT riders have had to look the other way as a posse of accomplished Flat racers have made off with the Champion Hurdle. The distinction has been achieved in recent seasons by Kribensis, Royal Gait and Alderbrook: it is now safe to say River North will not be joining them.

Peter Savill was plainly disappointed with his six-year-old at Kempton yesterday. Set an easy task in the first division of the Extra Daylight Novices' Hurdle, River North moved purposefully to the front approaching the final flight. However, a sloppy jump by the odds-on short cost him precious momentum and Karshi forged ahead on the run-in.

Richard Dunwoody, who rode River North, maintained the outing would improve his mount. But Savill was under no illusions. "If he was going to make it over hurdles he'd have won that," he said. "That has to go down as a disappointing performance."

Indeed it was, even if the winner is thought Cheltenham material by his trainer, Henrietta Knight. Karshi's triumph was particularly welcome: he carries the colours of his owner-breeder, Lord Vestey, whose wife, Cecce, returned home from hospital this week after suffering a stroke.

If yesterday's Commons vote went against the extra daylight hour, the Vestey's would surely have been converts to the cause after Castle Sweep extended his unbeaten record in division two of the event named for racing's supporter.

Karshi's defeat of River North, Foil Stone and Arctic Thunder — the latter Blunt-



River North leads the partially-hidden winner, Karshi, at Kempton yesterday. Photograph: Hugh Routledge

tered his chance away at the penultimate flight — offered a timely reminder that jump racing accords scant respect to the Flat form book. As Knight observed: "If that was a Flat race Karshi would have probably finished fourth. It's amazing how hurdling turns the form around."

David Nicholson would have been of the same opinion when contemplating Zabadi's achievements in advance of the Walton Juvenile Novices'

Hurdle. In two outings Nicholson's expensive Irish recruit has twice been unsighted behind Ocean Hawk, the latter renowned for his consistency.

The outcome was very different this time as Zabadi, in the hands of Adrian Maguire, reached the final flight straining for his head. Maguire duly obliged him and the four-year-old sprang clear to earn himself a favourite's chance in the Triumph Hurdle at Cheltenham. If Coral's quote of 8-1

appears cramped, rest assured you would travel many miles before witnessing as dominant a performance.

The stewards, in their wisdom, saw no reason to inquire into the 34 lengths by which Zabadi bested his opponent against Ocean Hawk at Exeter. Even Nicholson was surprised enough to declare an unsatisfactory inquiry. "If there isn't a stewards' inquiry, there should be."

Not that it would have made

much difference, for Nicholson was as bemused as anyone. "He ran an awful race at Ascot and when he came back after the Exeter race he blew as if he had never been on a racecourse," the trainer said.

"We have done nothing different with the horse at home, nor did I change the riding instructions," Nicholson added. The reasons will be rendered academic if Zabadi lands his Cheltenham prep race with equal authority.

Pridwell to show way in Champion Hurdle Trial

HAYDOCK PARK BBC1

12:30: Plenty of pace here with Mudahim, Putty Road and Better Times Ahead all likely to race prominently. Mudahim won this last year but, after an interrupted preparation, may need his seasonal debut.

Better Times Ahead has a solid form chance but Putty Road, last season's Sun Alliance Hurdle winner, has more scope and gets necessary ground conditions for the first time. David Nicholson's runner was four lengths ahead of Strawberry Angel on their seasonal debuts, but the leading American hurdler, now with Charlie Brooks, should relish his first attempt at this trip. At his best, the 11-year-old Simpson could prove the biggest danger.

1:00: Myseliv is the form choice judged on her best performances last term, but Charlie Egerton's horses are not firing at the moment and, in a race with limited betting appeal, her Ascot conqueror, Pridwell, makes more appeal. The six-year-old has not always looked the easiest of rides but appears better than ever after reverting from chasing to hurdling. Moorish has to overcome a long absence and Atours, second to the progressive Collier Bay at Sandown last time, looks a bigger threat.

1:30: If Lonesome Glory is a genuine Cheltenham Gold Cup contender then the top American jumper must win this with something to spare. He was mightily impressive when winning at Sandown seven weeks ago, but was aided by the leniency of the handicapper. The bold jump-



TODAY'S RACES ON TELEVISION

ing eight-year-old will not have a stiffer test, much weight before or encountered such soft ground and, at likely cramped odds, is worth opposing. Smith's Band is progressive, while Earth Summit should be able to front run on a favoured track. But I will side with Scottion Banks, who is improving by leaps and bounds and looked potentially top class when winning at Wetherby nine days ago. Tartan Tyrant

needed his seasonal debut when finishing third that day and should strip fitter here.

KEMPTON PARK CHANNEL 4

2:10: The lightly-raced Native Field benefited from a step up to 2½ miles at Newcastle last Saturday when falling by the minimum margin to catch stablemate, Traingait. Today's extra furlong will help and Jimmy Fitzgerald's talented hurdler can go one better. Kalasadi is well handicapped on early-season

form but is arguably better on firmer ground. Angelos Double is clearly capable of better and should be watched in the market.

2:40: The unbeaten and well handicapped Grooving will have plenty of supporters here but I would not want to take too short a price about Josh Gifford's runner. His three wins have been achieved in slowly run races and his jumping is still a shade novicey. Thornton Gaie has won four of his last five starts but has been penalised accordingly. Sobr-raped, impressed when quickening off a strong pace to foil Kingsfold Pet at Ascot and can defy top weight.

3:10: Question marks hang over several of these, not least Bas De Laine, arguably the form choice but who appears to have a bit for himself. Master Boston was a shade lucky to complete a treble at Wetherby nine days ago, but is the most likely to give his running. However, File Convo could be the value proposition. The 12-year-old has not raced for six weeks but goes well fresh and Jenny Pitman's string is in form.

3:40: Inchalloch has disappointed on his last two runs and is worth opposing with his penalty. Trying Again does not look a natural chaser and has yet to come close to reproducing the standard of his hurdles form. Nicky Henderson invariably produces an Arke candidate and Sublime Fellow is already being spoken of as Cheltenham Festival material. The six-year-old has shown particularly well and will be well backed on his debut over fences.

RICHARD EVANS

KEMPTON PARK

1.10 JET RULES (nap) 2.40 Warm Spell
1.40 Challenger Du Luc 3.10 File Concord
2.10 Rosina Mae 4.10 Spring Double

Our Newmarket Correspondent:
2.10 Sessie Seed.

GOING: GOOD

1.10 MIDDLESEX NOVICES HURDLE
(£3,022, 2m 5f) (13 runners)

101 0-21 HUNTING MUSIC (11) (G) M. J. May G. Hurdle 8-11-7 M. Richards 98
102 10 CHIMNEY COOKERY (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
103 40-12-12 LUTHERAN (16) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
104 0-10 CHIMNEY COOKERY (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
105 0-10 CHIMNEY COOKERY (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
106 4-0-2 JET RULES (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
107 0-10 CHIMNEY COOKERY (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
108 0-10 CHIMNEY COOKERY (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
109 0-10 CHIMNEY COOKERY (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
110 0-10 CHIMNEY COOKERY (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
111 0-10 CHIMNEY COOKERY (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
112 0-10 CHIMNEY COOKERY (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
113 0-10 CHIMNEY COOKERY (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98

BETTING: 7-2 Right Underneath, 9-2 Well Arranged, Hunting Music, 6-1 Jet Rules, 8-1 Chime Eerie, Purple Stone, 10-1 Chime Eerie, 10-1 Chime Eerie.

1995: ECHO FLOW 6-11-4 (D. O'Brien) 8-2 (T. G. G. 8-1)

RACING NEXT WEEK

MONDAY: Newton Abbot (first race, 1.30), Southwell (AW, 1.40), Warwick (1.50).
TUESDAY: Leicester (1.30), Lingfield Park (AW, 1.50), Market Rasen (1.40).
WEDNESDAY: Ffosfabon (1.20), Seaport (1.40), Wolverhampton (AW, 1.40).
THURSDAY: Huntingdon (1.20), Lingfield Park (AW, 1.40), Wincanton (1.30).
FRIDAY: Doncaster (1.00), Lingfield Park (1.01), Southwell (AW, 1.30).
SATURDAY: Ay (BBC, 1.00), Cheltenham (CA, 1.10), Doncaster (CA, 1.01), Lingfield Park (AW, 1.40).
Flat meetings at bold.

GUIDE TO OUR IN-LINE RACECARD

101 113143 GOOD TIMES (13) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
102 113143 GOOD TIMES (13) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
103 113143 GOOD TIMES (13) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
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1.40 SUNBURY NOVICES CHASE
(£4,260, 3m) (9 runners)

101 31-21-21 CHALLENGER DU LUC (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
102 31-21-21 CHALLENGER DU LUC (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
103 31-21-21 CHALLENGER DU LUC (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
104 31-21-21 CHALLENGER DU LUC (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
105 31-21-21 CHALLENGER DU LUC (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
106 31-21-21 CHALLENGER DU LUC (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
107 31-21-21 CHALLENGER DU LUC (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
108 31-21-21 CHALLENGER DU LUC (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
109 31-21-21 CHALLENGER DU LUC (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
110 31-21-21 CHALLENGER DU LUC (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
111 31-21-21 CHALLENGER DU LUC (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
112 31-21-21 CHALLENGER DU LUC (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
113 31-21-21 CHALLENGER DU LUC (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98

BETTING: 6-4 Challenger Du Luc, 5-2 River Luce, 5-1 Fallow Countryman, 6-1 Castle Court, 10-1 Highland Jack, 10-1 Sole Gent, 10-1 Sole Gent.

1995: SAMON JOSEPH 8-11-5 (D. O'Brien) 5-1 (T. G. G. 4-1)

2.10 BIC LAZAROVIC HANDICAP HURDLE
(£4,015, 2m 5f) (15 runners)

101 34-21-21 LUCKY BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
102 34-21-21 LUCKY BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
103 34-21-21 LUCKY BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
104 34-21-21 LUCKY BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
105 34-21-21 LUCKY BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
106 34-21-21 LUCKY BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
107 34-21-21 LUCKY BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
108 34-21-21 LUCKY BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
109 34-21-21 LUCKY BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
110 34-21-21 LUCKY BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
111 34-21-21 LUCKY BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
112 34-21-21 LUCKY BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
113 34-21-21 LUCKY BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98

BETTING: 4-1 Seaside Seal, 5-1 Native Field, 7-1 Angles Double, 4-1 Lucky Blue, 10-1 Ever Smile, 10-1 Ever Smile, 10-1 Ever Smile.

1995: ASK THE NAVIGATOR 9-11-1 (D. O'Brien) 5-1 (T. G. G. 4-1)

FORM FOCUS

LUCKY BLUE best of 17 in 17 hurdle races, good to firm. EVER SMILE best of 17 in 17 hurdle races, good to firm. EVER SMILE best of 17 in 17 hurdle races, good to firm.

2.40 BIC RAZOR LANZAROTE HANDICAP HURDLE

(£17,125, 2m) (13 runners)

101 33-12-12 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
102 33-12-12 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
103 33-12-12 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
104 33-12-12 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
105 33-12-12 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
106 33-12-12 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
107 33-12-12 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
108 33-12-12 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
109 33-12-12 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
110 33-12-12 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
111 33-12-12 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
112 33-12-12 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
113 33-12-12 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98

BETTING: 11-4 Thomson Gate, 4-1 Sonar, 5-1 Frickley, 10-1 Silver Green, 10-1 Silver Green, 10-1 Silver Green.

1995: TRYING AGAIN 7-11-1 (D. O'Brien) 5-1 (T. G. G. 4-1)

FORM FOCUS

SONAR best of 17 in 17 hurdle races, good to firm. SONAR best of 17 in 17 hurdle races, good to firm. SONAR best of 17 in 17 hurdle races, good to firm.

3.10 FULWELL HANDICAP CHASE
(£18,169, 2m 4f) (10 runners)

101 41-11-11 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
102 41-11-11 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
103 41-11-11 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
104 41-11-11 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
105 41-11-11 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
106 41-11-11 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
107 41-11-11 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
108 41-11-11 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
109 41-11-11 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
110 41-11-11 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
111 41-11-11 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
112 41-11-11 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
113 41-11-11 SONAR 7 (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98

BETTING: 4-1 Seaside Seal, 5-1 Native Field, 7-1 Angles Double, 4-1 Lucky Blue, 10-1 Ever Smile, 10-1 Ever Smile, 10-1 Ever Smile.

1995: BERNARD 5-11-1 (D. O'Brien) 5-1 (T. G. G. 4-1)

FORM FOCUS

SONAR best of 17 in 17 hurdle races, good to firm. SONAR best of 17 in 17 hurdle races, good to firm. SONAR best of 17 in 17 hurdle races, good to firm.

5.00 HAYDOCK PARK CHAMPION HURDLE TRIAL
(Grade 1, £12,820, 2m) (6 runners)

101 50-11-11 ATOURS (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
102 50-11-11 ATOURS (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
103 50-11-11 ATOURS (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
104 50-11-11 ATOURS (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
105 50-11-11 ATOURS (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
106 50-11-11 ATOURS (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
107 50-11-11 ATOURS (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
108 50-11-11 ATOURS (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
109 50-11-11 ATOURS (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
110 50-11-11 ATOURS (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
111 50-11-11 ATOURS (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
112 50-11-11 ATOURS (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
113 50-11-11 ATOURS (14) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98

BETTING: 7-4 Myseliv, 2-1 Myseliv, 2-1 Myseliv, 10-1 Myseliv, 10-1 Myseliv, 10-1 Myseliv.

1995: REBEL 6-11-1 (D. O'Brien) 5-1 (T. G. G. 4-1)

FORM FOCUS

ATOURS best of 17 in 17 hurdle races, good to firm. ATOURS best of 17 in 17 hurdle races, good to firm. ATOURS best of 17 in 17 hurdle races, good to firm.

1.30 PETER MARSH CHASE
(Limited handicap, Grade 1, £18,570, 3m) (6 runners)

101 21-11-11 LONESOME GLORY (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
102 21-11-11 LONESOME GLORY (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
103 21-11-11 LONESOME GLORY (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
104 21-11-11 LONESOME GLORY (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
105 21-11-11 LONESOME GLORY (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
106 21-11-11 LONESOME GLORY (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
107 21-11-11 LONESOME GLORY (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
108 21-11-11 LONESOME GLORY (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
109 21-11-11 LONESOME GLORY (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
110 21-11-11 LONESOME GLORY (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
111 21-11-11 LONESOME GLORY (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
112 21-11-11 LONESOME GLORY (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
113 21-11-11 LONESOME GLORY (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98

BETTING: 5-4 Lonesome Glory, 4-1 Scottion Banks, 3-1 Scottion Banks, 1-1 Tartan Tyrant, 12-1 Scottion Banks, 15-1 Well Blasted.

1995: EARTH SUMMIT 1-10-1 (D. O'Brien) 5-1 (T. G. G. 4-1)

FORM FOCUS

LONESOME GLORY best of 17 in 17 hurdle races, good to firm. LONESOME GLORY best of 17 in 17 hurdle races, good to firm. LONESOME GLORY best of 17 in 17 hurdle races, good to firm.

2.00 IRLAND NOVICES CHASE
(£3,779, 2m 4f) (6 runners)

101 22-04-11 EVER BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
102 22-04-11 EVER BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
103 22-04-11 EVER BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
104 22-04-11 EVER BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
105 22-04-11 EVER BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
106 22-04-11 EVER BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
107 22-04-11 EVER BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
108 22-04-11 EVER BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
109 22-04-11 EVER BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
110 22-04-11 EVER BLUE (10) (G) S. J. P. O'Brien A. Turrel 5-11-4 P. C. C. 98
111 22-04-

Powerful pack can beat France

England must go back to the forwards

FROM DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT
IN PARIS

HOW easily forgotten is the fact that, at the Parc des Princes here today, England go into rugby union's five nations' championship as the title defenders. But that was year 124 of rugby's old calendar for the international game and this is the first year of the new one.

The acceptance of open rugby marks a fundamental change of direction at the game's elite level, even though it is the logical culmination of events over the past 20 years. Yet still sporting cycles come and go and England, in the wake of a World Cup which brought them less than they hoped, are in the midst of refurbishment; so, too, are Scotland, who go to Dublin in a mood of pessimism even though Ireland have not beaten them since 1988.

Since winning their eleventh grand slam, against Scotland last March, England have lost direction, primarily because of the cataclysmic defeat by New Zealand in the World Cup semi-final in June. They have gone in search of a game which, because of the construction of their domestic rugby, they cannot have, so today they would do well to revert to the pattern of play that suits them.

If they cannot reclaim what they should regard as their heritage — powerful forward play, dependable rather than exhilarating back play — then this will be France's day. The French federation may be embroiled in the usual political wrangling, this time over the award of television contracts, but there is a relaxed air about their team and management, and appreciation that the new era, with its built-in demand for entertainment, should suit them.

While Jack Rowell, the England manager, snaps back at the critics who have dogged his heels through the autumnal travails against South Africa and Western Samoa, his opposite number, Jo Maso, seeks to combine the traditional excitement of French back play with the forward organisation that modern rugby demands.

In the selection at centre of Richard Dourthe and Thomas Castaignède, he sees a throwback to the great days of Codrington and Trillo, of Maso himself in the 1970s. "Let's say

TODAY'S TEAMS IN PARIS

FRANCE

J-L Sedoumy (Colomiers)
E N Tarnack (Toulouse)
R Dourthe (Dax)
T Castaignède (Toulouse)
P St André (Montpellier)
T Lacroix (Dax)
P Carbonneau (Toulouse)
M Pénit (Toulon)
J Gonzalez (Beyonne)
C Calizmo (Toulouse)
A Bazzani (Agen)
O Merle (Montpellier)
O Roumat (Dax)
L Cabannes (Racing)
F Pelous (Dax)

Replacements: D T M McHugh (Ireland)
REPLACEMENTS: 16 P Bernet (Sables d'Oleron), 17 A Pénard (Brive), 18 G Accoceberry (Béglas-Bordeaux), 19 L Bénézech (Racing), 20 M de Rougemont (Toulon), 21 R Castel (Toulouse).

ENGLAND

15 M J Catt (Bath)
14 J M Slightholme (Bath)
13 W D C Carling (Harlequins)
12 J C Guscott (Bath)
11 R Underwood (Leicester/RAF)
10 P J Grayson (Northampton)
9 M J S Dawson (Northampton)
1 G C Rowntree (Leicester)
1 M P Riegan (Bristol)
3 J Leonard (Harlequins)
6 S Ojomoh (Bath)
4 M O Johnson (Leicester)
5 M C Bayfield (Northampton)
7 L B N Dalglio (Wasps)
8 B B Clarke (Bath)

TV coverage: BBC1 2.0 * captain
REPLACEMENTS: 16 J E B Callard (Bath), 17 P R de Glanville (Bath), 18 K P P Bracken (Bristol), 19 V E Ubogu (Bath), 20 R G R Dawe (Bath), 21 D Richards (Leicester)

that something of the Barbarian must always live in us," he says graphically, referring to the free spirit of the world's most famous invitation club.

That might be regarded as a flight of fancy were it not for the hard-nosed realism that exists in the France pack and without which Jean-Claude Skrela's concept, as coach, of total rugby would mean nothing. The French tight five is a



CHAMPIONSHIP

Tower of strength 46
Rob Andrew 47
Irish confident 47
Calm Townsend 47

formidable unit and their lineout incorporates no fewer than five players who can be regarded as ball-winners.

It includes young Fabien Pelous, who was played as a lock against New Zealand in the autumn but is now switched, in the manner traditionally beloved of France selectors, to No 8.

Pelous demonstrated against the All Blacks that he is a talented ball-handler; England will seek today to tie him in to the close-quarters demands of ball-winning

while they develop the game which has proved so successful against France at the Parc in the past.

Today, too, France have their "South Africans" back: the three players who missed the series with New Zealand because of Bernard Lapasset, the federation president's decree that Thierry Lacroix, Olivier Roumat and Laurent Cabannes had returned too late to France after a summer of provincial South African rugby. How ironic that Lacroix's experience at stand-off half for Natal should now have helped him to the pivotal post in French rugby.

True, Lacroix has played in the No 10 jersey on five previous occasions, but invariably in an emergency. Now the player, who stands 15 points from the national record of 354 held by Didier Camberabero, comes into what he may consider his own: at Dax, his club, he is the *paragon*, the boss of the back division. "I believe that I am now in my rightful place," he said this week. "When I was 22, I didn't understand why people said I was not made to be a stand-off. I tried to fill in all the holes."

Six years later, he appreciates the need to provide direction for others, though his opposite number, Paul Grayson, and Lawrence Dallaglio, the England open-side flanker, will try to ensure he has as little time as possible in which to do so.

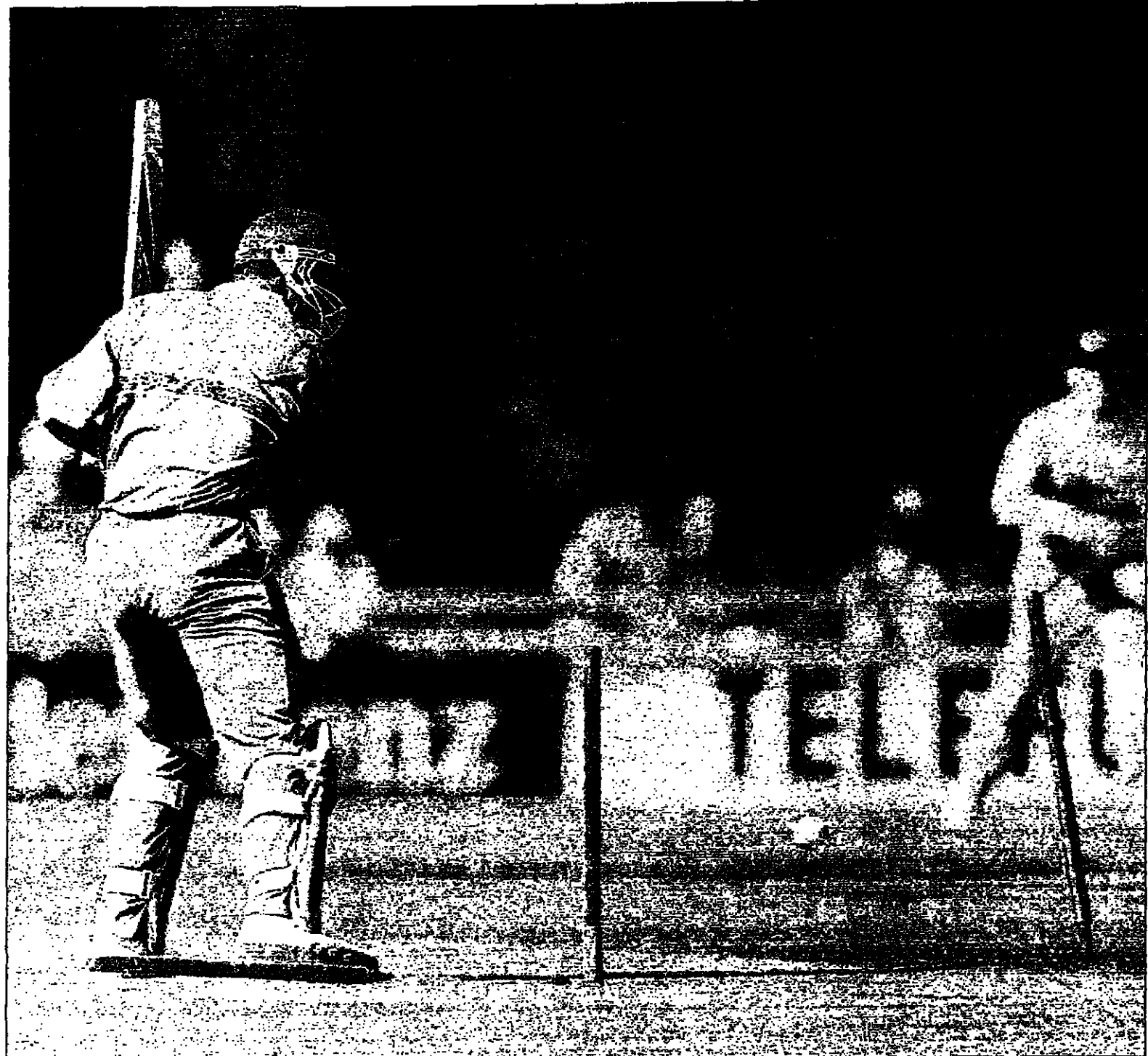
This is a big day for Grayson, none bigger: since England's winning run at the Parc began in 1990, it is fair to say that the most influential figure has been his predecessor, Rob Andrew, either as helmsman or points-scorer.

On Grayson and his club partner, Matt Dawson, falls the responsibility for shaping the game; but, if their forwards do not provide them with the means, their influence will be negligible.

So far this season, England's pack has lacked the coherence of yore: the recall of Steve Ojomoh is intended to add a dynamic which has been missing and Jason Leonard will hope to give Michel Pénit the warmest of welcomes to international rugby though, at 26, the Toulon loose-head prop is no spring chicken.

The game's other debutant, Jon Slightholme, on the England right wing, could not wish for a more testing start, but his senior colleagues will have told him no horror stories about Paris.

England have found the Parc a more rewarding venue than any other of the home unions and if, against the odds, they should do so again, then the word will be more than the monetary value that open rugby places on the match today.



Cronje, South Africa's captain, has only one stump left standing after being utterly defeated by a ball from White. Photograph: Graham Morris

Small target too tall for England

FROM SIMON WILDE
IN EAST LONDON

EAST LONDON (South Africa won toss): South Africa beat England by 14 runs

ENGLAND'S tour of South Africa cannot now finish early enough. Last night, in the sixth one-day international here, they experienced a humiliation as great as any they have experienced in the past fortnight when they failed to reach a target of 130 against an attack lacking Alan Donald, their great tormentor.

At 75 for three after 28 overs, with Hick and Russell together and having just completed the only half-century partnership of the match, England appeared to be moving inexorably towards victory. Even their opponents seemed to concede as much.

But it was then that Hansie Cronje, the South Africa captain, took a gamble with his fledgling spin bowler, Paul Adams, who had not bowled since Hick took him apart in Cape Town in the first match of the series. With the first ball of his second over, Adams had Hick caught behind — admittedly it was a questionable decision. Hick's third in six innings — and with his next ball he bowled Thorpe through his legs with his stock ball.

After that wickets fell in rapid succession as England's

remaining batsmen descended into panic brought on by so many recent defeats. Russell and Illingworth were both dismissed through suicidal running and no one had the confidence to take control, not even Fairbrother, who was last out for 13, his side's second-highest score after Hick's 39.

Gough and Martin, England's last two batsmen, had helped Fairbrother to add 20 but the margin of defeat was large for a match in which 20 wickets fell in 85 overs for 244 runs. England are now 5-1 down in the series with the final match to be played in Port Elizabeth tomorrow.

England should have won, if for no other reason than that they had the great advantage

of batting second on a pitch that was difficult to read. Indeed, the pitch offered them some excuse for their defeat because it was quite unsuitable for such a high-profile occasion, which attracted yet another capacity crowd, this time of 17,000.

Even before the match was over, All Bacher, the managing director of the United Cricket Board of South Africa, had requested pitch reports from the umpires, the captains and the groundsman. In truth, the whole thing was a muddle. Originally, the match was to have been played on a re-laid surface that was fast and bouncy but the authorities got cold feet and switched to what they thought would be a safe alternative.

It was so slow and low in bounce that it was a notable achievement for a bowler to get the ball to pass over the stumps, an experience that will at least have familiarised both sides with what awaits them on the Asian sub-continent when they go to the World Cup next month.

The question for all the batsmen was how to bat on such a surface. Few had much of an answer. South Africa were all out for 129 with 50 balls of their allocation unused, their lowest score in a one-day international at home; and England limped past their lowest of 93, which dates back 21 years to a World Cup meeting with Australia at Headingley.

Four South Africans failed

to score, including Lance Klusener, 24, an all-rounder from Natal, who was playing for his country for the first time, and two Englishmen. Seven others could not reach double figures.

Both pinch-hitters failed, Snell for South Africa and White for England. White at least tried to follow his brief, before giving a catch at the wicket, but Snell did a passable impersonation of an orthodox opener before seemingly giving up in despair.

It was certainly not easy to hit over the inner ring of fields. Kirsten, who would have been run out on six but for Thorpe's curious decision to field the ball with his feet, was one of the first to try but holed out to a good leaping catch by Smith at deep mid-on.

Rhodes fell in a similar way, though not before he had kept McMillan company for 12 overs, the longest partnership of South Africa's innings and, at 35 runs, the most productive.

McMillan was the first batsman, and perhaps the only one other than Hick, to find a *modus operandi*. He did not try anything rash and worked the ball around, scoring an unbeaten 45. His lively little partnership of 30 with de Villiers proved crucial.

Subbs Row's role, page 42

EAST LONDON SCORES			
South Africa won toss			
SOUTH AFRICA			
G Krieken c Smith b Cork	17		
R P Snell c Atherton b Martin	8		
*W J Cronje b White	13		
J H Kallis lbw b Martin	0		
B M McMillan not out	45		
J N Rhodes c Gough	10		
b Illingworth	10		
L Klusener lbw b Gough	0		
S M Pollock b Gough	0		
T D J Richardson lbw b Gough	0		
P S de Villiers b White	15		
P R Adams b Cork	0		
Extras (b 1, lb 11, w 1, nb 2)	15		
Total (41.4 overs)	129		
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-25, 2-29, 3-29, 4-54, 5-59, 6-59, 7-98, 8-98, 9-128			
ENGLAND			
*M A Atherton c Richardson	6		
C White c Richardson	6		
b de Villiers	6		
R A Smith b Pollock	0		
G A Hick c Kirsten b Adams	39		
R G Russell run out	12		
G P Thorpe b Adams	0		
N H Fairbrother b Snell	13		
D G Cork b Adams	2		
R K Illingworth run out	1		
D Gough lbw b Snell	4		
P J Martin not out	5		
Extras (b 1, lb 13, w 12, nb 1)	27		
Total (48.4 overs)	115		
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-10, 2-11, 3-19, 4-75, 5-76, 6-78, 7-88, 8-95, 9-104			
BOWLING: Cork 8.4-12-22; Martin 9-10-2; Gough 10-1-25-5; White 7-1-18-2; Illingworth 9-1-29-1			
*M A Atherton c Richardson			
b de Villiers	6		
C White c Richardson	6		
b de Villiers	6		
R A Smith b Pollock	0		
G A Hick c Kirsten b Adams	39		
R G Russell run out	12		
G P Thorpe b Adams	0		
N H Fairbrother b Snell	13		
D G Cork b Adams	2		
R K Illingworth run out	1		
D Gough lbw b Snell	4		
P J Martin not out	5		
Extras (b 1, lb 13, w 12, nb 1)	27		
Total (48.4 overs)	115		
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-10, 2-11, 3-19, 4-75, 5-76, 6-78, 7-88, 8-95, 9-104			

EC threatens action on foreign players ruling

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON

FIFA, football's world governing body, and Uefa, the European governing body, have been given a final warning by the European Commission (EC). If they do not abolish the rule that restricts clubs from playing a maximum of three foreign players, and annul the transfer fee system, they could face fines or court action. The EC has given them six weeks to comply.

Both practices were declared illegal by the European Court of Justice last month. It stated that they violated the European Union law that bars agree-

ments which restrict competition. The judgment was based on a European Union treaty article guaranteeing workers the right to move freely within the union.

The EC said it had told Fifa and Uefa in a letter that it would open formal legal proceedings against them and lift their immunity from fines if they did not give a satisfactory response. An EC spokesman said yesterday: "The matter is out of our hands. The European Court has handed down a judgment and we have no option but to take steps to ensure it is complied with."

Although the EC has made it clear it

wants to see the court judgment honoured in full, it is up to the British courts to decide whether the transfer ruling applies to transfers within the United Kingdom. This will happen if a player decides to challenge the continuation of the system, which is worth an estimated £100 million a year in fees between British clubs.

Uefa angered the EC earlier this week by saying that it would continue to maintain its "three-plus-two" rule, which limits teams to fielding a maximum of three foreign players and two "assimilated" foreigners in European club competitions. An assimilated

player is one who has lived in the country for five years or has played in his club's youth team.

Uefa argued that the court ruling, which ended a five-year legal battle by Jean-Marc Bosman, the Belgian player, allowed it to maintain the three-plus-two policy because teams in European competitions also represent their countries. A Uefa spokeswoman said yesterday: "We cannot comment on this as we have not received any letter. When we do and have studied it, we shall issue an official press release."

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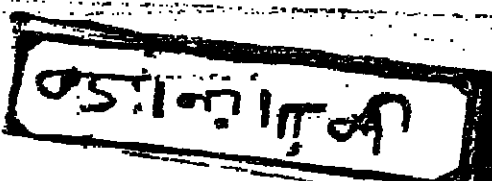
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ELIZABETH'S STORY



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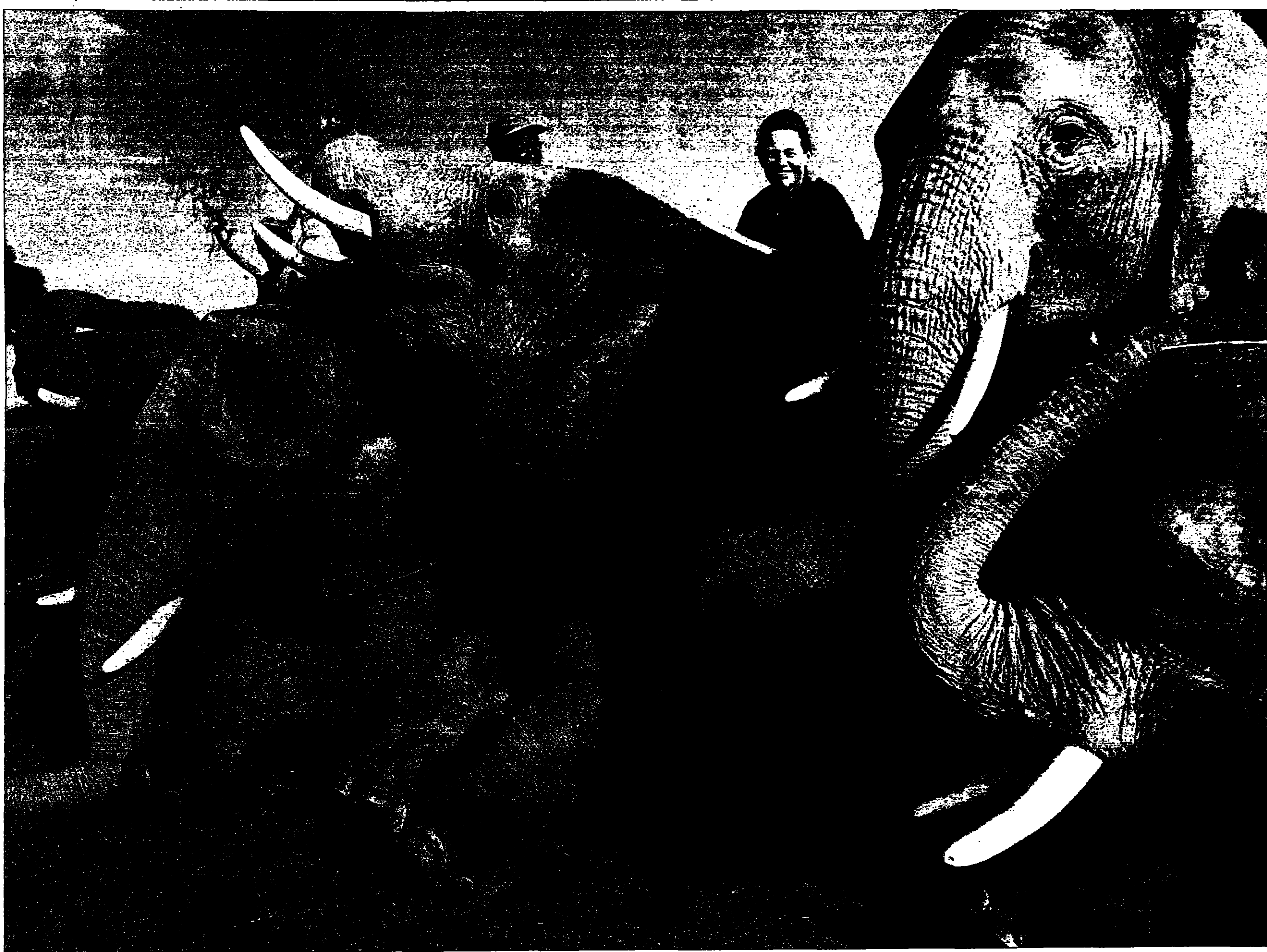
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WEEKEND

THE TIMES SATURDAY JANUARY 20 1996

DOCTOR DOLITTLE AND HER WILD IDEA



By Sam Kiley

Toto flicked his head backwards, catching the tiny woman under the ribcage with his forehead as his tusks passed either side of her body, and sent her backwards in a half somersault on to a pile of his dung. "Don't you bloody well do that with me," said the middle-aged English academic, as she staggered back towards the one-and-a-half ton adolescent bull elephant. I winced. Not for Dr Marthe Kiley-Worthington, but in anticipation of what Toto now faced.

"It's time you learnt some manners," she spat through clenched teeth, bracing her shoulders and drawing herself up to her full height of five foot two. More than a passing acquaintance with the doctor — she is my mother — has taught me that Toto was in for it. Any second now, I thought, and she was going to give the poor fellow a straight right at the top of his trunk, the sensitive site of the organ-pipe complex of sinuses he uses to rumble, trumpet, and communicate in subsonic booms with the other five members of his group. I'd seen her push a cow off its feet for having trodden on her own; and, in a fit of anthropomorphic rage, thrash a Massey Ferguson tractor with

a monkey wrench, Basil Fawlty-style, for refusing to start. In the moments it took for my mother to regain her composure, and summon the science she was harnessing to train a group of Zimbabwean elephants, I foresaw Toto's "voice" reduced to the effeminate hoots and beeps of a Mini Metro. But the doctor was on her best behaviour. She had been invited by Norman Travers to his Imire Ranch — set amid tobacco fields and small hills 105km from Harare — to

debunk the myth that African elephants cannot be trained, much less put to any use. After all, thumping pachyderms was hardly consistent with her "animal education" principles of "positive reinforcement". Humans daring enough to disagree with the doctor — herself the leathery product of a childhood in the Congo and Kenya — are treated to the full cut from the serrated edge of her tongue. In normal discourse, her vocabulary is not so much blue as deep purple. With animals like Toto, however, she is capable of other-worldly patience and a level of empathy she has never shown for her

own kind. "He's getting fed up. We'll change the exercise," was Toto's only punishment. Under orders from my editor to spend a week observing the doctor in much the same way as she has studied animal subjects for her five books — among them *The Behaviour of Horses*, *Animals in Circuses and Zoos*, *Chiron's World*, and *Eco-Agriculture: Food First Farming* — I finally answered a question that had always niggled me: why are some people better at getting along with animals rather than their own kind? The

Continued on page 5, col 1

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ROYAL BIOGRAPHY

'Life had been difficult and rootless for Philip almost from the start...'



Elizabeth's story



TODAY

■ Concluding our exclusive serialisation of *Elizabeth*, we examine the royal childhoods: Philip's troubled and independent early years, the young Princess's privileged and cosy upbringing with nanny



■ The biographer behind the ballyhoo: on the facing page, Mary Riddell talks to *Elizabeth* author Sarah Bradford about what she revealed and omitted, how she is coping with instant infamy, and why she opted to publish and be damned

PHILIP'S CHILDHOOD

Prince Philip was, by blood at least, more royal than his uncle Mountbatten and more closely linked to the British Royal Family. Born in 1921, he was the son of Mountbatten's elder sister, Princess Alice, and Prince Andrew of Greece.

On his mother's side he was a direct descendant of Queen Victoria: through his father he was, like his first cousin, Princess Marina, descended not only from the Greek/Danish royal family but also from the Russian imperial family, his grandfather, George I of the Hellenes (Queen Alexandra's brother "Willy"), having married the Grand Duchess Olga, granddaughter of Tsar Nicholas I.

Prince Philip's father was one of their seven children. Prince Philip was the youngest child and only son of Prince Andrew and Princess Alice: he had four sisters and was seven years younger than the youngest of them.

Life had been difficult and rootless for him almost from the start. Born in 1921 on the kitchen table of the family villa, Mon Repos, in Corfu, he was a refugee less than a year later when George V sent a British warship to rescue his family from the latest Greek coup (his father, Prince Andrew, would probably have been shot by the leaders had it not been for British intervention).

The Greek royal family had never been rich in royal terms. As nominal rulers of one of the poorest countries in Europe and occupants of probably the most insecure throne, they had had neither time nor opportunity to accumulate valuable possessions.

Prince Philip's parents were in many ways an ill-matched couple. His father, Prince Andrew, was described by his youngest daughter as "delightful, extrovert, with a colossal sense of humour, very amusing". Prince Philip, who got on extremely well with his father when he was around, which was increasingly rarely, inherited his father's forehead and the shape of his head, and his mother's fine nose and lips.

Princess Alice had been very deaf from childhood, but she had learnt to lip-read in several languages. She was very strict with her children: Prince Philip's relationship with her was good if not superficially affectionate.

She was as courageous and independent-minded as he was. While living in German-occupied Athens during the Second World War (when she lost more than 40lb living off flour mixed with warm water), she saved the lives of two Jews, a mother and daughter. They had two rooms at the top of Prince George's house, where she lived, and when the Germans came to look for them, Princess Alice pretended to be not only deaf but half-witted, so they went away.

Princess Alice did not play a part in her son's adolescence. When Philip was only ten, a very vulnerable age, his world began to crumble around him, not for the first or the last time. His mother had a breakdown, apparently caused by the menopause, and was sent for treatment to Vienna and Berlin. The house where they were living at St Cloud, in Paris, was given up and Prince Philip's father went off to live in the South of France.

By 1931 all his sisters had married German aristocrats: Princess Sophie, the youngest, known as "Tiny", married Prince Christopher of Hesse at the age of 16 in 1930; his three other sisters all married in 1931 — Margarita to Prince Godfrey of Hohenlohe-Langenburg, Theodora, known as "Dolla", to Berthold, Margrave of Baden, and Cecile to George Donatus, Prince of Hesse and the Rhine.

Prince Philip was sent to Cheam, the preparatory school in England, to which he was later to dispatch Prince Charles. Cheam was followed by a brief two terms in Germany at the school founded by Kurt Hahn at Schloss Salem, home of Philip's sister Dolla and her husband Berthold, later to become better known after his transition to Scotland as Gordonstoun.

Hahn, a German Jew, was arrested after the Nazis came to power in 1933 and, after the intervention of highly placed British friends, fled to Britain where he founded Gordonstoun. In 1934 Philip was sent to school there, a formative experience which he was to insist his sons must share.

As a teenager, despite being a member of a large extended family, Philip was very much on his own. Friends at Gordonstoun remember there always being uncertainty as to where he should spend his holidays. He was fond of his third sister Cecile's

husband, George Donatus of Hesse, and spent most of his holidays with them at Wolfsgarten or in Darmstadt, but this haven came to a tragic end when Cecile and George were killed in an air crash in 1937 en route for the London wedding of George's younger brother, Prince Ludwig.

In London, Philip stayed at Kensington Palace with his Mountbatten grandmother, the Dowager Marchioness of Milford Haven. "He was very independent," his sister said, "and he and his grandmother had frightful tussles of will." His Mountbatten cousins remember seeing Philip race up the stairs at Kensington Palace, stopping at the top to stick his tongue out at her.

He also stayed in the country with his mother's brother George, Marquess of Milford Haven, and his exotic lesbian Russian wife, Nadejda. In 1938, the year of Cecile's death, George Milford Haven died of cancer, leaving Prince Philip in the occasional care of his younger brother, Lord Louis.

At this point in Prince Philip's career, Lord Louis did not represent the "surrogate father" he is often made out to be. He was only beginning to take an interest in his nephew, who seems to have first visited Addean, the Mountbattens' country house, in the spring of 1938, accompanied by his cousin, David Milford Haven. "Philip was here all last week doing his entrance exams for the Navy," Mountbatten wrote to his wife in terms which suggest this was his first prolonged encounter with his nephew at close quarters. "He had his meals with us and he really is killing me. I like him very much."

According to Mountbatten's official biographer, the decision that Philip should join the Navy and not, as he had first chosen, the Air Force, was



Faces of Philip: clockwise from top left, as a proud Greek prince in 1930; athlete, 1935; toddler in 1922; midshipman, aged 19; in the Gordonstoun Cricket XI; centre (left), on holiday in France

Mountbatten's. It was as a result of this decision that when, in July 1939, the King, the Queen and the two Princesses, accompanied by Mountbatten, made an official visit to the Royal Naval College at Dartmouth on the yacht, *Victoria & Albert*, his nephew, Elizabeth's cousin, was a cadet there.

"Philip accompanied us and dined on board," Mountbatten noted briefly in his diary on July 22, 1939, and the next day: "Philip came back aboard the *Victoria* for tea and was a great success with the children."

Philip was extremely handsome: tall with Nordic good looks, blond hair and fine features. He was confident and, Crawford thought, a bit of a show-off and "rather off-hand in his manner". The crucial meeting between him and Elizabeth took place at the Captain's House at Dartmouth. He joined the Princesses playing with a clockwork train on the nursery floor, but, not surprisingly, soon got bored with the childish amusement and suggested going to the tennis courts and jumping over the nets instead.

The key to Philip's character is that he has had to be self-reliant and independent since the age of ten. Since the family broke up at St Cloud in 1930, he had had nowhere that he

could call home, just a succession of relatives' houses, schools, ships. By 1946 he was virtually an orphan. His father, Prince Andrew, had died on December 3, 1944, in Monte Carlo, while Philip was at sea.

Philip had, therefore, been unable even to attend his father's funeral: after the war he and Mike Parker, a naval friend, travelled to Monaco to collect from the Prince's mistress all that he had left to bequeath to his son — a pair of hairbrushes and cufflinks and some trunks full of old suits.

At his grandmother's home in Kensington Palace, Philip kept trunks described by his valet as "donkey's years old" crammed with junk from childhood and school days — even baby clothes — as if he wanted to be able to cling on to some tangible identity in his rootless life. His mother was still in Athens, where she founded an order of nuns and where his uncle, George of Greece, had obtained his throne back as a result of a plebiscite in 1946 and was now installed as King George II of the Hellenes.

The remainder of his family, his three surviving sisters, were all living in Germany, fortunately for them in the Allied Zone. His sister Princess Sophie, widowed when

her husband, Prince Christopher of Hesse, was killed in Italy during the war, was about to marry again, to Prince George of Hanover. Philip borrowed a Canadian army vehicle and dashed across war-ravaged Europe to turn up unexpectedly at the wedding at Salem in May 1946.

He was not only virtually homeless but also practically penniless, with only his naval pay to live on — just enough to run a black MG sports car. On his return to England he went to a naval training establishment at Corsham, near Bath, called *HMS Royal Arthur*. Whenever he had leave, he would dash up to London and beg a bed at the Mountbattens' house at 16 Chester Street while they were spending the weekend at Broadlands.

The Mountbatten servants loved him: "He was so considerate, so anxious to avoid giving trouble to people who, after all, were paid to look after the family, that we all thought the world of him."

● Edited extracts from *Elizabeth: A Biography of Her Majesty the Queen*, to be published by William Heinemann on January 24, £20.

© Sarah Bradford 1996

ELIZABETH'S CHILDHOOD

Elizabeth saw a good deal more of her parents than most children of her age and class, certainly more than the children of the international smart set who were left behind as their parents visited each other's houses for weekends or holidays in Venice and the South of France in summer and at ski resorts such as Kitzbühel in winter. The Yorks never went abroad except on duty.

The Duchess of York taught Elizabeth to read, much as her mother had taught her, reading Bible stories aloud on Sunday mornings and "the right sort of books" on winter evenings. They would sing songs around the piano after tea and then start on children's stories — *Alice Black Beauty*, *Peter Pan* and "anything about horses and dogs".

In the spring of 1932, Miss Crawford joined the Yorks' household as Elizabeth's governess. Marion Crawford was a tall, slim, 23-year-old Scots girl, independent-minded and ambitious, who had trained at Moray House in Edinburgh teaching underprivileged children.

Crawford first saw Elizabeth sitting up in bed driving an

imaginary horse with a pair of toy reins. When asked if she usually drove in bed, Elizabeth replied seriously: "I mostly go once or twice round the park before I go to sleep. It exercises my horses."

She and Margaret had a collection of more than 30 toy horses, each one of which would be solemnly unsaddled before they went to bed. Her favourite games involved toy horses and she groomed, fed and watered them, keeping the necessary brushes and pails lined up in the corridor outside her nursery.

At their first meeting, Crawford had been struck by the "long, comprehensive look" the child gave her. The six-year-old Elizabeth already had a sharp and critical eye ("She never misses a thing," her friends and courtiers would later say of her).

Crawford found Elizabeth almost too self-disciplined: her passion for orderliness amounting almost to an obsession. She would sort the coffee sugar crystals given by her parents as a treat after luncheon into sizes, while Margaret simply gulped them down.

After Crawford once told her sententiously, "nothing is impossible if you try hard

enough", Elizabeth took her at her word and went on trying night after night to place her shoes exactly parallel under her chair, with her clothes carefully folded on it.

Education was not at a premium in the York family. As Crawford recalled: "No one ever had employers who interfered so little. I had the feeling that the Duke and Duchess, most happy in their own married life, were not over-concerned with the higher education of their daughters."

As far as other children were concerned, the children's life was by no means as isolated as Crawford made out in her book, although the circle of their friends was exclusive. There were frequent children's parties at 145 Piccadilly.

Elizabeth had a particular friend named Sonia Graham-Hodgson, the daughter of a distinguished Harley Street radiologist. Exquisitely dressed in party dresses by Allah (Clara Knight, their nurse), the Princesses would go out to other children's parties, which the nannies enjoyed more than the children did.

Ordinarily, Elizabeth's day would start with a visit to her parents' bedroom after breakfast, then a morning of half-hour lessons with a break for

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ROYAL BIOGRAPHY

3

'...From the age of ten, Elizabeth was used to pomp and ceremony'

Under siege but unbowed

If a week is a long time in politics, it is an eternity in the life of a beleaguered royal biographer. For the past seven days, Sarah Bradford's home has been besieged, her answer machine clogged, even her former husband approached by those hoping for some bit of salacious gossip. In addition, her hyacinths have rotted away through neglect.

Bar the hyacinths, Bradford regrets little. She remains, however, astonished that the serialisation of her biography of the Queen should have provoked such interest and outcry.

When she began, six years ago, her project was seen almost as anorak prose — the biographical equivalent of train spotting. "The Queen?" friends would ask, bemused. "How dull."

"I thought they were quite wrong. The way she operates, the way she lives, how could that be dull?" Events have proved more exciting than she might have wished, but she was unshakable.

As a respected and established biographer, she had already laid the foundations for her latest work. Her book on George VI was the first step. "This was a natural progression. I knew all the personal sources, all the archival sources, and I wanted to carry on."

In those days, as she is quick to point out, the Royal Family remained unsullied by scandal. The Prince of Wales was, so far as the public knew, still ensconced in a fairy-tale marriage. There was no hint that royal biography was to become the black art of literary seance.

But even then, Bradford knew her brief reference to the fact that the Duke of Edinburgh may have been unfaithful — which has largely caused this week's furore — would be contentious.

"I started with a completely open mind. Then you're faced with the problem we're talking about, and you realise you cannot dodge it. It is part of their relationship — the wise way the Queen has dealt with it, by allowing him complete independence and not inquiring. If I had dodged it, I could have been accused of writing propaganda. I hope I've put it in context. It's not important in terms of the marriage, which has always been a very strong relationship."

"I hoped too that it might stop all sorts of 'nudge nudge, wink wink' stories." In this Bradford was, if not naïve, then certainly optimistic.

Many anecdotes proffered to her on a range of matters, she chose to omit. "You do have to think about the consequences. Some stories are too bad to mention, and I wouldn't touch them — true or not."

Nevertheless, among much uncouth hand-wringing by the moralisers, among the headlines citing royal "dis-may" and Palace "bombshells",

Bradford has not escaped scrutiny. Her sources, her Viscountess title, her reputation, even her figure (she is reported to munch while writing) have all been unkindly and meticulously raked over. Some of it she finds simply funny.

"Someone wrote about my bourgeois family and the defunct Irish peerage. My husband is not defunct. He is alive. You can see him upstairs."

As for the shurs on her reputation, she is sanguine. Her contacts, she knows, are impeccable. "People are at liberty to impugn my reputation, although those who know me know I do not say things without foundation. But neither will she identify those impeccable sources who have helped her. 'I'm not in the business

The troubles were not all born of meticulous research. The Princess of Wales's *Panorama* interview, the Queen's divorce letter — every new twist in the royal plot had to be incorporated into her book. And now it is finished and the copies are stacked for sale, the saga rambles on. She has not been astonished by the latest twist — the Queen's refusal to underwrite the Duchess of York's seven-figure overdraft. She knows her subject too well for that.

"She seems to be taking a tougher line all round. Fergie may once have been the indulged daughter-in-law, but not now. The Queen is concerned about the bad effect this consumer spending of the younger royals has on the public. She's not prepared to sub up any more, and I think that's right."

Bradford is a direct woman, accustomed to directness in return. She is also sternly critical of herself, and where she has regrets she is ready to admit them. She is sorry now, she says, that she mentioned — although not by name — the lady-in-waiting who pointed out to the Queen the Duke's roving eye, lost her job and subsequently committed suicide.

The paper chase was elementary, she acknowledges, for the newspapers which did choose to name her. "That was very distressing, and I think it's awful."

Otherwise, she is unbowed and unrepentant. How easy for critics to accuse her of cashing in, but, as she points out, at the time she embarked on her book, royal biography was scarcely goldmine territory. "I certainly wasn't in it for the money. In 1990 no one was paying millions for that sort of thing."

Titled, a former debutante, she would appear to her detractors the ideal infiltrator. One of us. A woman silkily placed to infiltrate royal circles and glean what scurrilous detail she might.

But she is unafraid. "If you are convinced that what you have done is right, nothing is a problem. I have my reputation as a serious writer, someone who doesn't invent, who keeps confidentiality and does her homework. I have to live with myself. That is what is important."

Her book will be on sale within days, which, she says, will be an immense relief, for then both her detractors and the many who have phoned with messages of goodwill can make up their own minds.

And she will be able to start a new project — not, it may be a relief to hear, the House of Windsor. "No, that's enough for a bit. So don't expect *Queen Two*."

MARY RIDDELL



Taking the flak: Sarah Bradford

of naming names either. That way, if there's any flak over this book, then I get it."

She is too honest to pretend that her book has not also stung those whose lives it uncovers. "My job is to try to get inside the Queen's mind, to put the picture painstakingly together from evidence. I don't suppose she's utterly delighted, or that she can understand my motivation. But if you write biography, you have to tell the whole truth."

Nor, she imagines, will Princess Margaret — portrayed as trapped in endless unsuitable relationships, unhappy, threatening suicide — be rushing out to place a bulk order. "Princess Margaret will be jolly annoyed; but no, it won't have caused her pain. She'll say it's disgraceful, no doubt, but I've explained why she is how she is."



Elizabeth's life: clockwise from top left, at Olympia, 1932 tired, with her mother; watching the King; and at a birthday party

eleven and recreation, followed by reading, before lunch, which the girls would usually eat with their parents when at home.

Singing, dancing, music or drawing lessons took place in the afternoon, followed by tea, when, in the days before he became besotted with Wallis Simpson, Uncle David would often join them and stay for card games (his home, York House in St James's Palace, being only a short walk away). Then it would be bedtime, attended by their mother and father, and riotous games such as pillow fights in the nursery until Allah called time for bed.

Elizabeth was, of course, unaware of the problems which Uncle David was already causing his family. The likelihood of the Prince of Wales marrying a suitable girl now seemed increasingly remote.

From the day her father became King, when she was ten, Elizabeth was becoming accustomed to the extraordinary pomp and ceremony surrounding her parents, so that to her it appeared a normal part of life. This included the swarm of Household and staff with medieval-sounding names: the Lord Chamberlain, the Keeper of the Privy Purse, the Mistress

of the Robes, the Yeomen of the Silver and Gold and of the China and Glass Pantry, the Pages of the Chambers, the Pages of the Backstairs and of the Presence (all adult men, not boys as their titles would suggest).

The King and Queen were already training Elizabeth for the day when she would be at the head of this vast establishment. Since she had become the obvious heir to the Throne, they were taking her education more seriously. "I have started my daughter on Latin," the Duchess of York had told Osbert Sitwell in January 1935.

Elizabeth was often there when her parents entertained diplomats to lunch. On one such occasion in 1937, Sir Miles Lampson, the British envoy to Cairo, was amused to see the King fiddling with the knobs of his recently acquired television set, unable to make it work.

"Long before most children do," Crawford wrote, "Lilibet took an interest in politics, and knew quite a bit about what was going on in the world outside... the King would also talk to his elder daughter more seriously than most fathers do to so young a child... it was as if he spoke to an equal."

Her parents were anxious

that she and her sister should, as far as possible, feel that they were ordinary children and a part of the world beyond the Palace walls. The result was the formation of the 1st Buckingham Palace Company of Girl Guides (at Elizabeth's insistence, two Brownies were added to the Palace Company so that Margaret, too young to be a fully-fledged Guide, should not feel left out). The idea was that it should be a substitute for going out to school, so that the Princesses should meet and play with and compete with other children on an equal basis.

As an exercise in democracy, it was somewhat limited. "They were all dukes' daughters and Mountbattens — it wasn't at all democratic," one former member said. The other girls were expected to curtsy to the Princesses. The first meeting, Crawford recalled, was spoilt by the attendant nannies and governesses, while the children wore their best party frocks and white gloves.

Some of the more pampered children were shown up in a game which involved taking off their shoes and piling them in a heap in the middle of the floor, then finding them, putting them back on and

racing to see who could get back to the starting line first. "This never went very well," Crawford wrote, "as quite half the children did not know their own shoes! Lilibet and Margaret told me this with scorn. There was never any nonsense of that kind in their nursery."

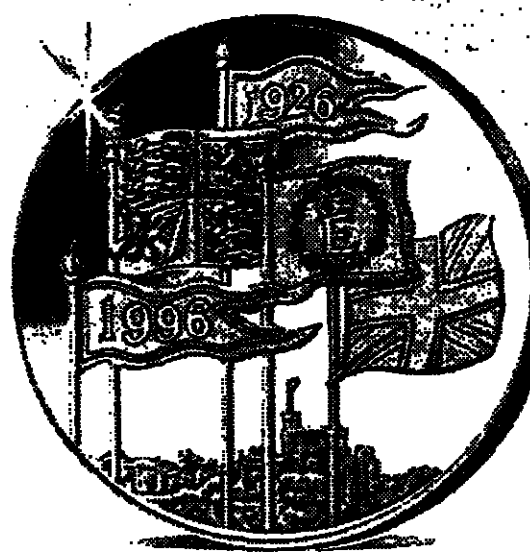
The education of women was not considered important in royal and aristocratic circles, where it was regarded merely as a necessary tool for those unfortunate who would have to earn their living and irrelevant to the needs of girls whose destiny was marriage. Queen Mary seems to have been the only member of the family who was concerned that the girls should be well educated. She remonstrated with her daughter-in-law over the fact that the children's education was confined to their governesses.

"I don't know what she meant," the Duchess of York told a friend. "After all, I and my sisters only had governesses and we all married well — one of us very well..."

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INSIDE STORY

5



Norman Travers (centre), who asked Dr Kiley-Worthington to train his elephants



After years of research, Dr Kiley-Worthington has a way with animals — even an obstinate one-and-half tonne young elephant

Continued from page 1
truth lies in these people's desire to reach out to others through their animal friends, to show off by proxy.

It seems a sort of unwritten rule of biography that "remarkable" people are never "nice". Rather, they are irascible, socially inept, arrogant, driven, blind to their own faults, fanatically evangelical in spreading their particular creeds. Thinkers ahead of their time also seem to have "difficult" relationships with their families and colleagues, and to spend a good deal of their lives howling their philosophies in the wilderness. That about sums up my mum.

In 1971 she horrified the inhabitants of the Sussex stockbroker belt, and the agricultural establishment, by starting an organic farm. For a decade we put up with "muck and magic" jokes, police raids on suspicion of pot-peddling, and ostracism at school. Now it's rare to find any lecturer in agriculture who would confess to ever having been cynical about the merits of eco-friendly agriculture, and Sussex housewives have turned green.

Her pioneering work on the behavioural abnormalities in pigs and veal calves prompted animal rights campaigners to boycott factory farms. As she is a meat eater and user of animals, the campaigners can't stand her, while she accuses them of wanting to set up a form of "animal apartheid" and "animalism".

Her work on animal thinking and research into their emotional lives has caused her to be labelled a sentimental crank by some of her colleagues. In the past five years she has rolled eco-agriculture and her work with animal behaviour into one package, and lives according to her principles in a "multi-species dwelling" (a barn in Devon) which she shares with Arab horses, llamas, sheep, cattle, chickens, dogs — and the few humans who can tolerate a thunderbox for a lavatory, and back issues of the *Yellow Pages* for paper.

While studying for a second doctorate, this time in applied philosophy and animal ethics, her main obsession these days is to explore inter-species relationships; in particular, those

'She lives in a barn with llamas, horses, cows and sheep'

between humans and other animals. In the blurring of the borders between "wild" animals and humans may lie their salvation.

Toto, and the five other tame elephants at the Imire Ranch are part of an exclusive club of fewer than 50 elephants in Africa that can be ridden by man. The most famous group is owned by an American, Randall Moore, who has run the hugely successful Elephant Back Safaris in Botswana's Okavango Swamp since 1990. The longest running "family" of backed nellies, descendants of King Leopold's elephant cavalry, lives in jungle isolation in Zaire's Garamba National Park.

Whereas Mr Moore likes to keep his skills to himself, for understandable commercial reasons, and Zaire's mahouts are idle because of that country's domestic chaos, Mr Travers at Imire Ranch is anxious to spread the idea that Africa's elephants can be of more use to man than as a target for the tourist's camera or hunter's gun.

"In Africa, the areas where elephants can live are getting smaller and smaller. But man has used animals for thousands of years, and I see no reason why the elephant should not be seen as useful,

rather than as a pest for those living alongside them," says Mr Travers, whose love of elephants comes from years spent hunting them in the Zambezi valley.

Toto, Nyasha, Chaka, Zulu, Makavushi, and Lundi (the only female) were all orphaned when their parents were gunned down in culls

between eight and 15 years ago. Hand-reared by Mr Travers and his wife, Jill, they were ridden by children while they were youngsters but, as Mr Travers says: "When they became big and stumpy, we had to give it up."

Later, with the help of a friend who trained polo ponies, Mr Travers found that

the already tame elephants were amazingly easy to ride. "It took us only a couple of days to get on their backs. It is ridiculous that we don't utilise them more. If they can have a happy and productive life they can be useful to the tourist industry, African farmers, and even anti-poaching units. After all, they are immensely

powerful, you can see much further from their backs, they are silent, and they don't get punctures," he says.

He hired his mother to come to his magnificent ranch, where tourists can ride the elephants, to teach his team of Shona mahouts how to train their elephants to go on to greater things. Many Africans like to see wild animals at a very safe distance — or on the spit.

Chum Goshu, the chief mahout, chuckled as we rode Nyasha through the bush on a patrol which was guarding Mr Travers's seven black rhino orphans from poachers. "All our friends think we use magic to ride the elephant," he says.

The impression that one needs special powers to deal with the vast nellies affected more than the local tribesmen. "My God," said Judy Travers, Norman's daughter-in-law, after watching the doctor in a

training session. "She's just like Dr Dolittle." The hero of the children's books, which my mother grew up on, is certainly her inspiration. She would like to be able to talk with animals. Why else spend a lifetime studying how they communicate?

However, she is no horse whisperer, or South American shaman who mutters *secretos* in the ears of magical, realist beasts. The reality lies in the scientific applications of body language, observation of an animal's attention span (most bore easily) and the constant use of one's voice to signal approval and disapproval — backed up with rewards of horse nuts for getting things right.

The process is painfully slow but produces a bond between man and beast which is hard to break. After a week of training with the doctor,

Imire's human residents gathered for a demonstration of what the animals had learnt. The first week or so is the most important in training an animal such as an elephant. The main breakthrough is to ensure that the elephants, which are highly intelligent and quick to pick up new skills, grow to appreciate the emotional rewards of pleasing their handlers before they grow into four-tonne, randy leviathans.

Then it dawned on me, the demonstration is the trainer's payoff. As the large Travers family cooed and clapped at the performances of the elephants, who lifted their feet, swung their legs, picked up old car tyres, and allowed their handlers to swing on their tusks on command, my mother shivered with pleasure. Through animals she can get the approval she craves from the one species to which she cannot relate — her own.



Lesson learnt: five young elephants, now mounted by mahouts, succumb to the doctor's no-nonsense training methods

Picture on page 1 showing Dr Marthe Kiley-Worthington training the young elephants on Norman Travers's Imire Ranch in Zimbabwe, and the three pictures on this page, by SAM KILEY

Despite the distractions, Ruth Gledhill listens to a sermon at St Martin-in-the Fields, a refuge for the homeless

At work, a lesson in Christian grace

AS SHE announced the collection, the woman priest glanced in our direction, her look spelling not exactly fear, but more a hesitant trepidation. The response was immediate, but perhaps not as bad as she had expected. "Give me a hundred pound then," said a man lying face up and shoeless on the pew beside me with what can only be described as a loud mutter. We were at St Martin-in-the-Fields in Trafalgar Square, a refuge for the homeless and the alcoholic, where the oppressive rows of blackwood pews have become day-beds for those without night ones to sleep on.

The Rev Clare Herbert, St Martin's part-time curate, was one of 30 preachers shortlisted for last year's Preacher of the Year award, organised by the College of Preachers and sponsored by *The Times*.

For many, such as Clare, preaching has become a strategic exercise in risk management. Hecklers and drunks are as regular as the services at St Martin's. Preachers there must be filled with humility if they are not to be totally humiliated. The thousands of preachers like her, struggling against apathy, indifference and boredom, week after week and often with little reward, are those who are most deserving of the highest praise. They are among the preachers *The Times* is trying to find and encourage in its annual award, launched today for its second year.

Feeling cowed by the emptiness of the building around us, we were at the monthly "World at Work" service, which for some reason is held on a Sunday evening, a time when most of the people who work around

Trafalgar Square are sensibly at home. Our coughing and paper rustling was quietened by a "shhhhhh" from the back as Clare took her chair on the chancel steps. The aim of this service is to continue to struggle to make some connection between the life of work and the life of the spirit," she said.

We thanked God for the places where we worked, for our responsibilities and for the chance to care for those we worked with. The elderly man who had quietened us could now be heard making his way from the back of the church. He came to an unsteady rest in our pew as a petite, elderly woman in a camel coat began that week's lesson from St Paul. We could just make her out behind the lectern, struggling with the small print in the *Alternative Service Book*: "He was generous with his mercy... it is through grace that we have been saved."

We sang a hymn, and our new neighbour stared disconcertingly at me, muttering, I

resolved to sing more quietly but Clare, undaunted by the competition, launched gamely into her sermon, wisely speaking from the lectern, not from the pulpit, a black edifice hanging directly over our pew in traditional admonitory style.

As she began, our neighbour threw his green, woolly hat at me. "One of the most difficult things about calling ourselves Christians is knowing what it means," she said. Various crashing noises erupted from our pew as our new friend searched for his lost gold earring beneath the wooden kneeler. "For me, being a Christian hinges around this word, grace." Our friend took his shoes off, extended himself lengthwise on the pew and made snuffling noises.

Speaking calmly, clearly and fairly fast, with the occasional watchful glance in our direction, Clare described Christ's "disgraceful death as a blasphemer, deemed to be unreachable and outside all hope of repen-

tance". Our neighbour interrupted with an "Oh, shut up".

She spoke of St Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus and what the discovery of such grace might mean for all of us today. "It will mean dropping some of our heavy rules and regulations about what it means to be a good, successful, beautiful, happy, fulfilled person," she said. "Even more frightening still, it will probably mean dropping some of our religious rules about how and where we pray and how often we come to church. It is scary to let our assumptions drop as we find out what God wants us to look at next within ourselves."

She ended by describing a ramshackle garage near her home. It was a place where grease, dust and rubbish prevailed. But many people came daily to sit and talk with the mechanic. "The place may be grimy but it is graceful," she said, as our neighbour began to snore. Grace overturns old assumptions, she continued, "setting us free to see God where not-God is expected, to take delight in places where the glory of God is to be revealed among the muck and grime of our lives."

We confessed to God that "the gifts you have given us are spoilt by our selfishness and lack of regard for your sovereign will," that we were sinful people and were sorry for our failures. There was a symbolic sharing of salt, when we went to the altar and took salt in our hands as if it were bread. I resisted the temptation to throw it over my shoulder.

We ended with a prayer for strength in our work and left for home with a sad goodbye to our lonely friend, who by some indefinable grace had done so much to cheer us.

St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London, WC2N 4JL. Tel: 0171-930 0089.

★ A one to five star guide to the service ★

VICAR: The Rev Nicholas Holtam.

ARCHITECTURE: James Gibbs's famous 18th-century church with its Corinthian columns seems to adapt to its congregation. Impressive and stately when full, it is dour and depressing when almost empty, as it was for our service. ★★

SERMON: By declining any temptation to enter into battle with her adversary, the preacher came out the victor. ★★

MUSIC: The organist thundered out the tunes to hymns, breathing new life into our small, choicest congregation where the loudest voices were also those most out of tune. ★★

LITURGY: An attempt to reconnect the world of work with God. ★★

SPIRITUAL HIGH: Against all the odds, this service was strangely exhilarating. ★★

AFTER-SERVICE CARE: Coffee, tea and biscuits served to all in the north porch. ★★

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FAMILY HOLIDAYS: Mary Ann Sieghart finds the recipe for domestic bliss in a French farmhouse ...

Be thankful for your Lot

I often sigh for the BC era. Then we were adventurers and explorers. We climbed the Inca Trail high up in the Peruvian Andes. We sailed around the Galapagos Islands. We trekked in the Himalayas and the Tatras and discovered the remotest parts of eastern Turkey. Before children, anything was possible.

Still my husband and I fantasise. My favourite virtual holiday involves following the Silk Route from northern Pakistan to Kashgar in Chinese Turkistan. He wants to go to the more obscure islands in the Indonesian archipelago. Both of us are desperate to get to Vietnam before it becomes another Thailand. But fantasies they remain.

It is true: children change everything. They turn intrepid travellers, trekkers and backpackers into villa-renting, bucket-and-spading, estate-car parents. It is not just that you would be mad to take a four-year-old and a two-year-old in the back of a lorry thundering along the Karakoram Highway. Even if we were mean enough to take three weeks away from the children to do it on our own, we would no longer have the energy for such jaunts. The combination of two full-time jobs and a young family makes relaxing holidays a necessity.

Now that nannies no longer work weekends, working parents of small children often find themselves more exhausted on a Sunday evening than they felt on Friday night. Holidays are, therefore, the only opportunity to recharge rundown batteries. But they have to be carefully planned.



Cool retreat: stone farmhouses set among rolling hills are the perfect hideaway

So what are the key ingredients? My checklist runs as follows: a large house with solid internal walls, help with the children, a sandy beach or swimming pool within easy walking distance, good food and weather, and another family with amusing parents and children of roughly the same age. In the old days, architecture, landscape and culture would have been top of my list of priorities; now they are a bonus.

This year, we spent consecutive weeks in two houses in France. The first, rented by some friends, was a rambling Victorian edge-of-town mansion in a charming resort on the Briquigny coast. We took

communal holidaying to the extreme: six parents, eight children under the age of seven (including two babies), three nannies and a cook. Of its type, it was bliss.

We went shrimping with the children every morning when the tide was low, took them to the beach after lunch, and handed them over to the nannies for tea so that we could play tennis, ride, or collapse into bed. We are hugely and well but barely ventured beyond the immediate environs.

Then we drove down to the Lot with one of the two families. It was a pretty dread-

ful day-long journey, not to be recommended in a car without air-conditioning (ours does not). As soon as we arrived, we determined to put the car on a train for the return — which, as it involves the much cheaper and shorter Dover/Calais crossing, turns out not much more expensive and far less time-consuming than driving back to St Malo and taking the overnight ferry. It also avoids the cost of petrol and motorway tolls. The auto-train does demand hours of hanging around at each end but, once aboard, you simply go to sleep and wake up at Calais. On the frictionsness scale, it leaves parents far less frazzled than driving.

The Lot is a gorgeous place to holiday. Just south of the Dordogne and much less touristy, you are unlikely to bump into a braying British acquaintance in the local mar-

ket square. Enconced in a cool stone farmhouse with a pretty garden and swimming pool, in what felt like a private valley, we had to wrench ourselves away for shopping and sightseeing.

Rolling hills, woods and valleys give the Lot an intimacy and verdancy that easily match the Dordogne. There is plenty to see and do if you want to explore. One afternoon we visited Montflanquin, a delicious old hilltop village, and another day we took the children to a nearby model dinosaur park and stalactite cave.

But our local medieval hilltop village was as perfect as any visitor could wish for. Vieux Pujols consists of two long streets of chocolate-box prettiness, with an ancient market square, complete with cafe and church. From La Toque Blanche, the Michelin-starred restaurant on the opposite hill, you can watch the sunset turn the buildings' stone to a blushing gold (as well as eating the sort of food for which you would pay a small fortune in Britain). In this house we cooked for ourselves; but it is no great strain to dribble olive oil and sprinkle fresh herbs over chicken, lamb, peppers, courgettes and aubergines on the barbecue. My first prerequisite — thick walls — was sadly lacking, so we adults managed to sleep only as late as the earliest-waking baby or child each morning. But, as a formula for an enjoyable holiday with small children, taking a house easily beats staying in hotels. The secret is not to be over-ambitious: remain in one place for as long as possible, and restrict sightseeing to the occasional day. Otherwise you return home as tired as you were when you set out.

And as for Vietnam, well, we live in hope. One day less touristy, you are unlikely to bump into a braying British acquaintance in the local mar-

Getting there

□ The author travelled independently with Brittany Ferries from Portsmouth to St Malo (£229 each way for three adults, two children, a car and a four-berth cabin). Reservations and information: 0990 360360.

□ In Villa Pujols, she was partly financed by Crystal France (0181-390 3335). It costs £1,495 a week (sleeping ten) in August, with a second week from £1,235.

□ Motorail (0171-203 7000) from Brive, in the Dordogne, to Calais costs £120 per car and driver plus £40 per extra adult and £25 per child. A four-berth cabin is £60. The Dover-Calais crossing costs about £100 for a car and family.



Daughter Evie was entranced by exhibits at the dinosaur park near Montflanquin



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Such a journey by road, with an assortment of hotels and border crossings, would indeed be a tiring experience. Whereas by river we are able to sail through the very heart of Europe with great ease. In addition to the enjoyment of visiting some of Europe's great cities, we are also able to enjoy the river cruise and the ever changing scenery, all from the comfort of a cabin or deck chair aboard the MS Rousse.



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... while for John O'Leary there is endless entertainment at a holiday complex in France

A smarter way to live it up on the Riviera

For countless families each year, a summer holiday on the Continent comes down to a choice between luxury camping, a villa or an apartment. It was only a matter of time before someone tried to carve out a new market by marrying the best features of each.

That is precisely what Eurocamp, the biggest of the fixed-site operators, has tried to do with its Eurovillages venture, which is about to start its second season.

Campers are wooed with the promise of a bit more comfort, and the villa types get the sort of facilities that will keep the children (and adults) occupied for days. A sort of Center Parks in the sun.

Indeed, French Center Parks in Normandy and the 00132 Valley are among the 31 locations in the Eurovillages' programme for 1996. The company has bought into holiday villages and apartment complexes, mainly in France, just as it has always done on the best campsites. This gives customers access to already successful complexes around the Mediterranean and in other popular holiday destinations.

Studios and apartments come in all shapes and sizes, in relatively peaceful clusters of 40, or bustling, self-contained villages of more than 1,000 units. All have pools and offer at least one major sporting facility, such as a golf course.

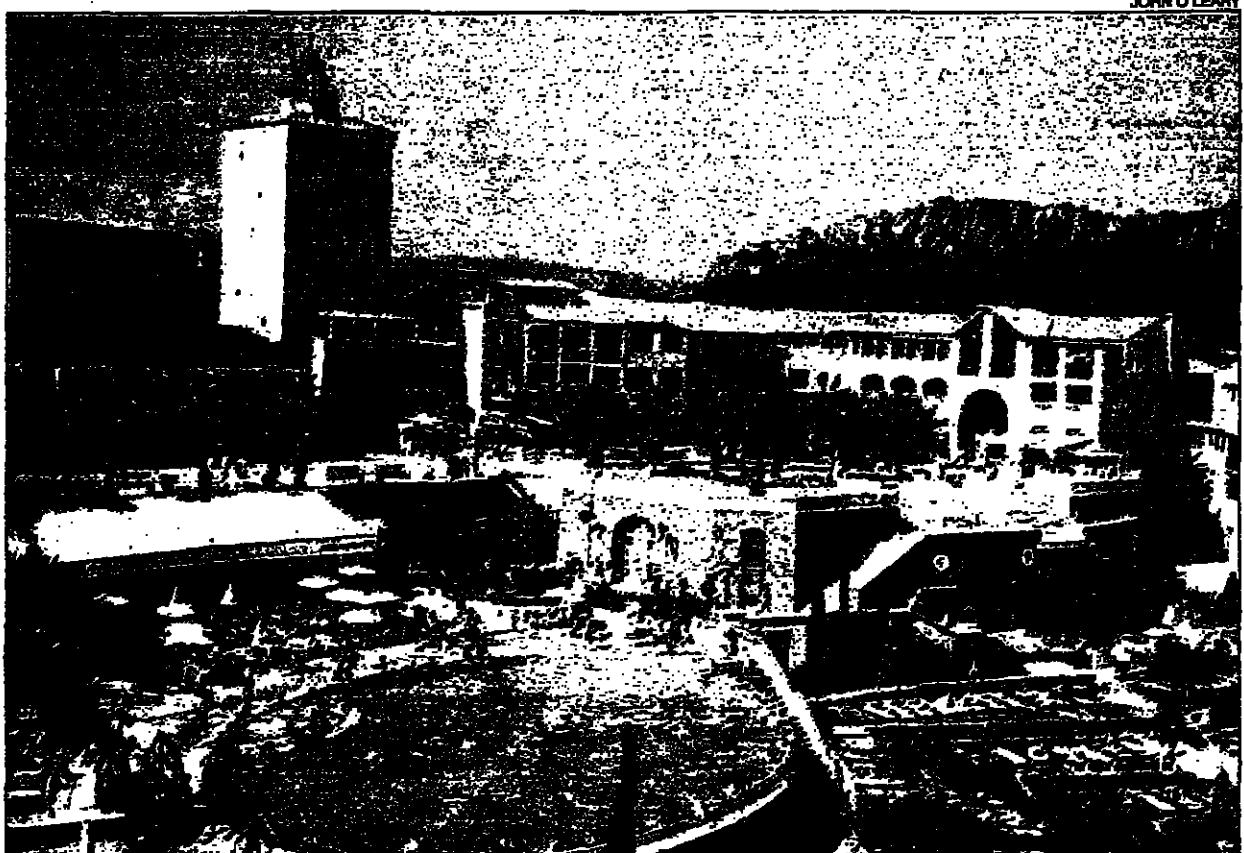
The flagship village of Cap Esterel, sprawling across a hillside on a particularly attractive stretch of the Côte d'Azur, has them all. This enormous, but beautifully designed development on the Bay of Agay between St Raphael and Cannes is about as far from the old idea of a holiday camp as you can get. Every conceivable sport is available, from archery to volleyball, and there is even a mini-train to take the effort out of a trip to the beach or supermarket.

A nine-hole golf course snakes its way around the 1,400 apartments, its heavy watering creating a steamy microclimate in summer. The 20 tennis courts are in constant use, and everywhere you go you encounter crocodiles of eager youngsters on their way to the climbing wall or the disco, or to learn scuba diving or surfboarding. Like much else at Cap Esterel, activities for children are not cheap, but they are superbly organised.

There lies the rub for British families. The state of the pound means that there is no such thing as a cheap holiday in France unless you are planning the equivalent of a monastic retreat — not a realistic proposition with three children in tow. Cap Esterel's eight restaurants, bars, shops and sporting facilities are all competitively priced in an



Lazy days: a mini-train takes guests to the beach



Playtime: Cap Esterel has eight restaurants, bars and shops and offers lots of activities to keep children amused

expensive area, but that still means serious money. The cheapest ice-cream will set you back more than £1, a round of golf more than £20.

The development belongs to the popular French chain Pierre et Vacances, which runs several of the Eurovillages' sites. Studios and apartments are comfortable and well equipped, with large balconies and optional extras such as television, phone and maid service. Nightly entertainment on the central terrace can be loud for young children, but does not go on late.

The development has been meticulously planned. The huge lagoon-style pool, with water slide and every possible gadget, is a magnet for children, leaving a deeper and uncrowded alternative to adults. The two are linked by artificial waterfalls, which appear purely decorative but actually form footpaths to keep grass and dirt from the sunbathing area out of the water. Yet visitors are only as regimented as they want to be. It would be possible to spend a fortnight at Cap Esterel without leaving the site, but that would be to miss the coves of the Côte Sauvage and the unspoiled Esterel national park.

The Esterel, with 100 kilometres of paths but limited access to cars, is a little-known gem of the Riviera. Complete with wild boar, which congregates photographically at feeding time, the park is a forest with often spectacular views. Further afield, the villages of Provence are within easy reach by car and, for those looking for something more lively, Cannes and Nice are not far away.

Cap Esterel may be the most lavishly equipped of the Eurovillages resorts, but the concept looks like a winner. The numbers were encouraging last summer despite the exchange rate, and the programme has expanded into Italy and Spain this year. The basic price of a holiday in one of the three locations outside France is not noticeably cheaper, but there should be savings in the cost of living.

Campers are wooed with more comfort

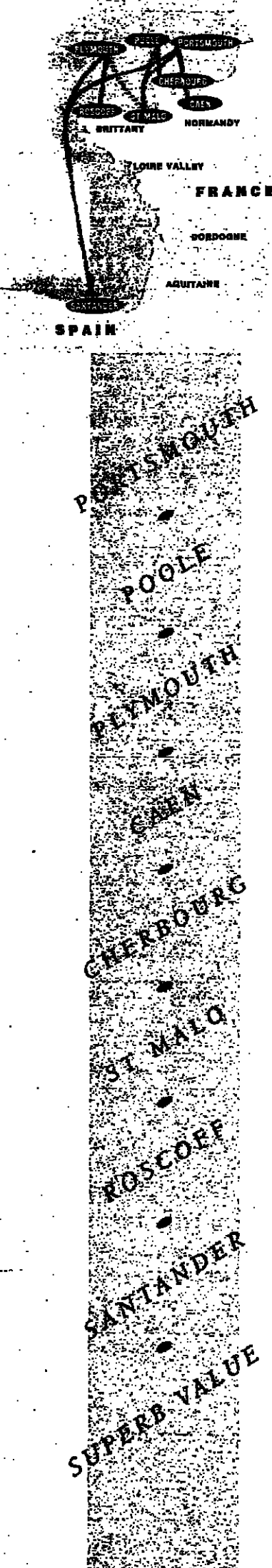
Eurovillages: fact file

□ The author was a guest of Eurovillages, PO Box 81, Dalton Way, Middlewich, Cheshire CW10 0UA (01606 734400, fax 01606 737193).

□ Prices, which include Channel crossings for car and up to five passengers, vary considerably according to location and the level of facilities, as well as the time of year. For example, a six-person apartment with sea view at Cap Esterel will cost £1,000 more for a fortnight at the start of August than its equivalent at St Jean-de-Monts, on the coast of the Vendée.

□ Studios for four to five people at Cap Esterel start at £524 for a fortnight until the end of March, rising to £1,733 at the height of the season. Apartments for the same numbers start at £566 for £615 with a sea view and go up to £1,925 in the first two weeks of August, when a sea view costs an extra £84. There is a 10 per cent discount on bookings made before the end of this month.

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FAMILY HOLIDAYS: Brian MacArthur on the teen scene in Turkey and Paul Hoggart visits Legoland



Hidden agenda: wise planning means that hotels and apartment blocks are never more than two storeys high at Olu Deniz, so they cannot be seen from the glorious beach

Say Turkey and the image conjured up will almost certainly be of the sweeping curve of the beach at Olu Deniz with its lagoon at one end and majestic mountains behind.

It was here last summer that I tried an experiment. At 16, teenagers are on the cusp: they don't really want to go on holiday with their parents but they are not yet quite ready to go off on their own. After the ordeal of GCSEs, they certainly don't want an earnest cultural holiday. At the top of the agenda is a sunny beach

Spreading their wings

by day and a throbbing disco by night.

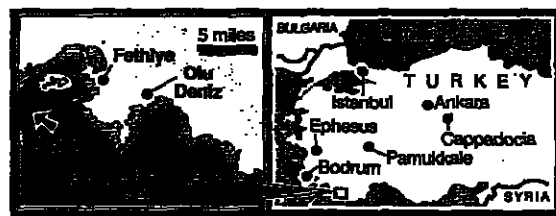
Olu Deniz, an hour-and-a-half from Dalaman airport after a four-hour flight, is a summer tourist resort on the Lycian coast which offers decent hotels, a superb beach, and a sense of adventure by night without any of the accompanying sense of menace that reportedly hangs over centres such as Bodrum. It is

also conveniently situated for excursions to some of the great sights of Turkey at Ephesus, Pamukkale and Cappadocia, or (for £105) an overnight visit to Istanbul.

We went half-board on a Thomson package to the Olu Deniz Resort Hotel, situated at the easternmost end of the beach, away from the most crowded areas and set in small blocks, where we had spacious rooms with balconies overlooking lush gardens bursting with fruit and flowers. The beach was a two-minute walk away, although several tourists (British) preferred to spend their days by the hotel pool.

Once booked in, cash was banished. Guests buy books of vouchers which are used to pay for drinks and meals that are not included in the package. At breakfast and dinner, the tables groaned with mountainous selections of hors d'oeuvres, chicken, lamb, fish, vegetables and fruit.

Turkey fact file: where to stay



□ The author was a guest of Thomson Discover Turkey.

□ A seven-night stay at the Olu Deniz Resort Hotel costs from £299, including flights, room and breakfast, and a week half board from £315. There are departures from 12 British airports.

□ Brochures are available from travel agents or by calling the Thomson Holiday Shop (0171-707 9000).

My daughter and her friend slept until nearly 10am, before setting off for a day on the beach, swimming, sunbathing and reading, interrupted when the heat became intolerable by a cheap snack at one of the restaurants behind the beach.

Once dinner was over, by

nine, the night was young. Music, Western and Turkish, wafted on the warm night air, along with the sweet-smelling smoke from the barbecues. This was when the girls set off into the night, an anxious parent left behind with the thought that girls cannot always be protected if they are to

grow up and learn to cope on their own — but it was difficult, though not without a few worrying moments when they had not returned to the hotel by midnight. But they were enjoying themselves hugely, meeting boys of all nationalities in the discos, afterwards sitting on the beach playing guitars.

Olu Deniz would not be to everybody's taste. It is now a mass tourist resort, although in early July it was not unbearably overcrowded. Geography and wise planning also give it one big advantage. Behind the beach the land falls back, so from the sea and the beach, the hotels, all only one or two storeys high, cannot be seen and you feel that you are swimming directly under the mountains.

Yet in the dip behind the beach there has grown a busy, bustling, makeshift "high street", a promenade of restaurants, cafes, bazaars, bars and discos. At night, the resort throbs with life and music. It is lively without being jollyish, crowded or brutishly noisy.

It was not a holiday I would have chosen myself but it was enthusiastically voted a success by the two girls.

Mini village is a model of ingenuity

Americans like saccharine fantasy. The British enjoy old-world funfair vulgarity. The descendants of the mighty Viking Sven Forkbeard, however, have a 25-acre theme park devoted to tiny, noddled bricks.

The Danish inventor, Ole Kirk Christiansen, is a most unjust omission from the Nobel Peace Prize roll. Lego is capable of tranquillising a hyperactive monster in seconds.

Ole bought his first plastic moulding machine in 1947, and his tricky little cuboids appeared soon afterwards. By the early Sixties the factory in Billund, Denmark, had so many visitors that his son Godfred decided to create an outdoor exhibition of models. Legoland opened in 1968, and Lilleby, the original model village, still lurks in the middle, a bonsai version of the world outside.

Today the park offers rides and activities, primarily for young children, but these are peripheral to what must be the world's largest and most intricate model village. I knew my children (aged three, six and nine) would love it, but expected to find it a trifle naïf myself. I was won over.

The heart of the park is Miniland, a vast area of reconstructed landmarks and landscapes, mainly from Teutonic Europe. There are palaces and castles, harbours, waterways and mountain villages, all meticulously copied from life.

I found the Norwegian Lofoten island fishing village particularly charming. "Medbourne", an English town modelled on buildings in Chester, York and Stamford, is drab in comparison.

The most exotic exhibits are grouped around the mini-boat ride. A Lego Capitol sits beside a 30ft Statue of Liberty. The Acropolis and the Golden Temple of Bangkok squat amid the mini vegetation.

Beyond Miniland lies a primary-coloured toytown. Everything not actually built of Lego or Duplo (the chunky

junior version) is made to resemble them. Here a Lego chef stands outside a cafe; there a Lego Indian skulls on a frontier sidewalk. The "theming" is ferociously detailed. One cafe serves Lego-shaped chips.

The park has a fine selection of "pink-knuckle" rides, exciting enough to thrill the under-10s. The best are the timber ride, a log-effect roller-coaster, the Mine Train and Lego Canoe, which winds past life-size American wilderness animals before plunging down a water-splash. Toy animals abound, particularly on Lego Safari, a jeep ride through an African game reserve.

In Legorodo, the western frontier town, visitors can pan for gold or join the Indian tribe of Chief Playing Eagle. There's even a campfire where, for a small fee, you can bake twists of fresh bread skewered on twigs.

For the very young, Duplo-land offers helicopter, train and plane rides, and plane rides, and plane rides, and plane rides.

If it rains there's an indoor area with thousands of bricks lying around to play with. To get an overview, start with the train ride round the park, or ascend Legotop, the 40-metre, revolving viewing platform. You can just about cover the park in one day but two-day passes are good value.

The Legoland Hotel is in the park, but there are many interesting places to visit in the area. We stayed in the Munkelbjerg Hotel in Vejle, half an hour down the road, set in a wooded park full of sculptures and overlooking a fjord. The Hans Christian Andersen museum at Odense is within easy reach.

The new Legoland at Windsor is due to open this year. I wonder how well the phlegmatic Danish charm will survive the transition.

● The author and his family were guests of Munkelbjerg Hotel, Munkelbjergvej 52, Grovovang, Denmark, 8000 SWITZ (0171-333 0066) and the Danish Tourist Board, 55 Sloane Street, London SW1X 9SY (0171-259 5958).

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TRAVEL

9

ITALY: 'Agriturismo' is the magic word opening up the rural delights of Tuscany and Umbria

Heaven for the accidental tourist

The best thing about holidays is the unexpected; and the best news from Italy is that you can build a whole holiday around the serendipitous pursuit of happy accidents. Agriturismo means you can wander around, enjoying a different Tuscan or Umbrian farmhouse every night if you want to, without booking and, although nothing that's good is cheap in Italy, at a bargain price.

For those who first fell in love with Italy as backpackers, and then came back for the summer fortnight's lease of a converted barn, there's now the chance to reconcile the youthful adventure of travelling with the more middle-aged demands of comfortable, charming and hospitable lodgings. Leave the main road for the minor ones, and branch off on to those roads that the indispensable maps of the Automobile Club d'Italia mark in white, and start looking out for the bright yellow signposts which blossom at the occasional rustic crossroads. Most will be trumpeting the attractions of a ceramics shop, a farm selling oil and wine, a restaurant, a two-star hotel; but sometimes there's a sign with the magic word "Agriturismo".

This sign won't give you any clues about what to expect; you may be spending the night in a converted dovecote, furnished to top Italian design specifications, or settling down in a simple, whitewashed room. Your host may direct you to the village trattoria, or offer you a five-course dinner under the stars, with lasagne baked in a medieval oven, and the roasted results of a day's hunting. You have tasted the olive oil which the farmer sells at his gate, you will now taste the olive oil the farmer keeps for himself.

Those who love Italy as I do know where to go, but as time passes we tend to go to fewer places, and to almost no new ones. We reconcile ourselves to the fact that we will probably never, after all, get round to seeing the place we really wanted to — in my case Gubbio.

The pleasure of an unplanned itinerary is in not knowing what tomorrow may bring. Those who get twitchy without an itinerary and a set of bookings should not embark on the agriturismo trail. The state tourist board supplies a list of about 3,500 farmhouses, which offer accommodation at all levels, and feature activities such as riding and fishing. These are primarily intended to be booked by the week, but many will have a room for the night. A double room will cost £40,000-£75,000 (about £17-£32), but the prices bear no relation to the relative comfort and amenity. The best place my family found happened to be the cheapest.

There always is a room, somewhere. During the crowded school summer holiday in Chianti, for instance, we knocked on the door of the Podere San Quirico, a 14th-century farmhouse on a hill surrounded by vineyards, and found two of its four double bedrooms free. Each was furnished in old Tuscan style, with great chestnut wardrobes and wrought iron beds. Chickens clucked in the garden, where a hayloft had been converted to provide separate, self-contained accommodation for up to five guests. There was a large communal kitchen, which no one seemed to use except to store mineral water in a capacious fridge. A riding school is nearby.

San Quirico is a town on the Chianti wine road, where many of the old estates have been converted into residential villages — expensive, soulless and artificial townships which should not be confused with the true spirit of agriturismo. Some will enjoy the cloying luxury, but these Stepford villages, where the original inhabitants have all eerily turned into waiters, have a deadness about them.

We were on a fly-drive holiday, and for summertime touring it is important to have an air-conditioned car. Our tiny, purple Renault Twingo looked like a surprised frog, but its ferocious blasts of cool air meant that we could do our travel-

ling whenever we wanted, even during the heat of the day when the only alternative was a siesta.

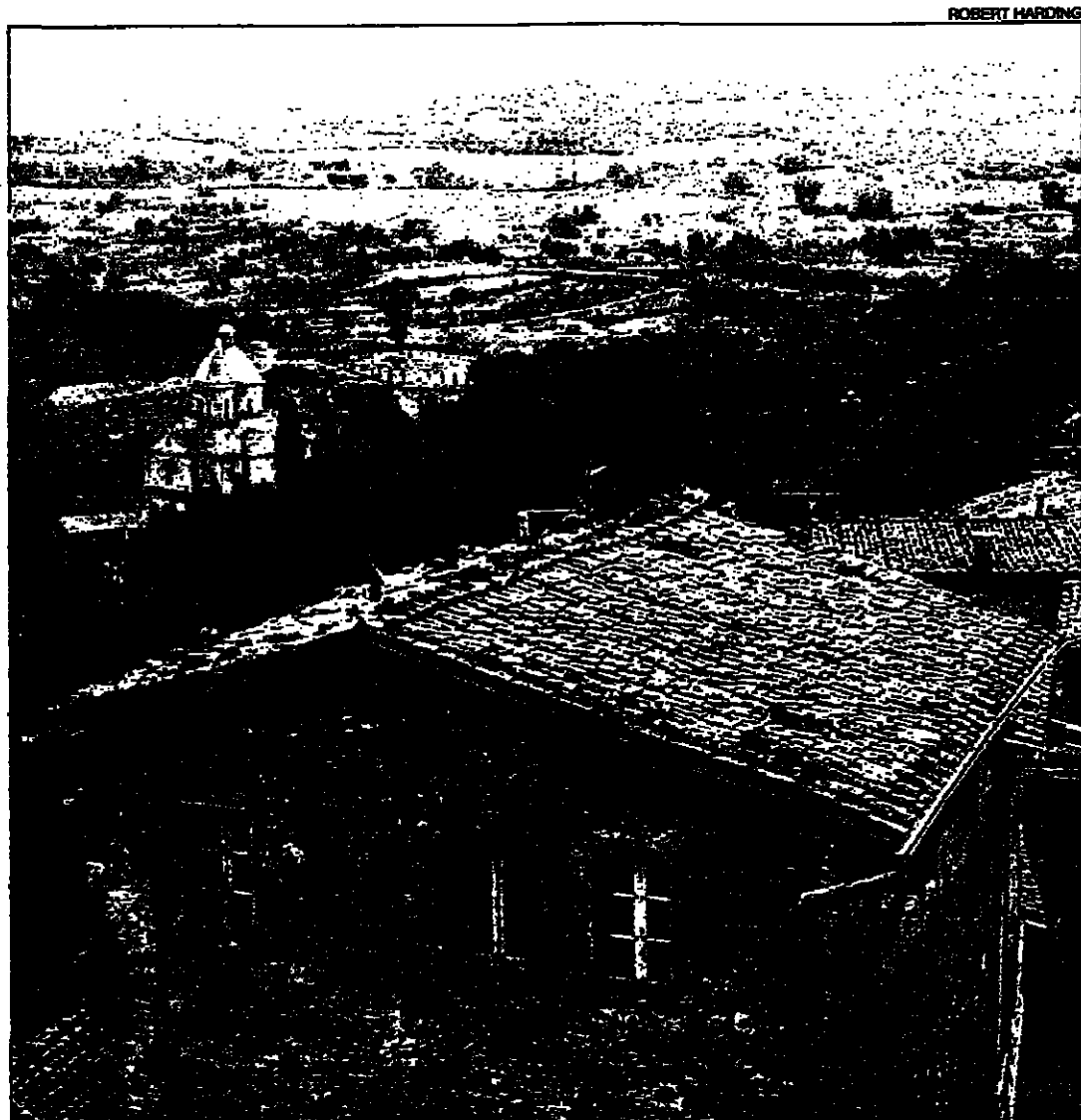
We did miss the swimming pool of the farmhouse where we have spent countless summer fortnights, but open-air village pools are available in an emergency, and provide an opportunity to observe Italian youth in full strut.

There were some duds along the way: a farmhouse near Ravenna run by an Italian Basil Fawley was a touch too rustic, and some farmhouses are modern, with large, dark, characterless rooms. But if that's the case, you move on — and discover, for instance, the Fattoria del Cerreto near Umbertide in the Tiber valley. Set on a hill surrounded by fields of tobacco, sunflowers, vines and olives, a complex of three farmhouses has been sensitively converted. There's a choice of simple double-rooms with bath, or self-catering apartments in the old granary or tobacco-drying tower.

Rinaldo Gianelli, the owner, has plans for a pool and a tennis court this summer, and he'll lend you mountain bikes to explore the estate, or to go to the local lake to fish. If you do nothing else, eat Signora Gianelli's home-made pasta and his treasured local truffles as the night sky turns to blue velvet.

The fattoria is on the spectacular mountain road to Cortona, and the nearby autostrade put Perugia and Assisi well within reach.

The best venue, unexpected as ever, came on the last night. Strategically poised for Pisa airport, we looked for somewhere to lay our heads around Lucca (twinned, intriguingly, with Abingdon, Berkshire). Spotting the local tourist office, I lost a 10,000 lire bet with my sons that, on a Sunday afternoon, it would not be open — after all, would the Abingdon office be open in similar circumstances? Lucca's was, and a helpful assistant phoned the Piccola Residenza di Villa l'Ulivo in the hills to the north. The old



The Tuscan countryside and its farmhouse stopovers are attracting the more adventurous travellers

farmhouse has a beautifully converted barn, which can accommodate three, or, in perfect romance, two. It has been simply and exquisitely refurbished by its owner, Luca Calabrese, whose father's bass voice will be remembered by older visitors to Glyndebourne. The Piccola Residenza has a garden with views over the countryside: an idyllic place to read, sleep, and have breakfast.

We had hardly come to terms with our good fortune when we were offered a tray of red and white wine, bread, salt and a small carafe of his olive oil. We discussed agriturismo, and he was sensitive to the dilemma of turning a traditional rural industry into a seasonal, rustic theme

park; but planning laws are strict. Our barn had a tiny kitchen so well-appointed that we were almost tempted to cook; fortunately, our host directed us to nearby Meccenate and an excellent restaurant.

There are whole areas where agriturismo, this hybrid of hospitality and set-aside, does not seem to have caught on: the area round Ferrara seemed particularly barren, which is a shame given the under-appreciated splendour of the city — Bologna on a more human scale. In that case, a one or two-star hotel is insurance against a night spent sleeping in the car. Some regions are better than others at co-ordinating and codifying the establishments in

their area, but long may an element of disorganisation last, so that the visitor can continue to trust to luck, and find the accidental felicity the true traveller delights in.

At last, I went to Gubbio.

DAVID JESSEL

● The author booked his holiday through Portman Travel, 618 Kingsway Road, Raynes Park, London SW20 8DN (0181-543 4439).

● A scheduled flight by Alitalia to Pisa costs £199 return, plus £10 airport tax. The hire of an air-conditioned Renault Twingo for 14 days costs £530.

● A list of properties is available from Agriturismo, Corso Vittorio Emanuele 101, 00186 Roma, Italy.

□ Citalia (0181-686 5533) is offering four-night breaks in Rome, staying at the five-star Hotel Eden for £538 per person. Alternatively, a two-night stay at the three-star San Remo in Rome costs £289 per person. Prices include B&B accommodation, return flights from Heathrow or Gatwick and transfers.

□ Take a self-catering holiday with Traditional Tuscany (0181-297 1470), staying at one of its many houses within about ten miles of Florence. For example, Villa Camerata (sleeping six) on the Bossi estate costs £480 from July 6-14. Activities available include swimming, riding and fishing. Flights not included in the price.

□ Cruises along the river Tiber are available again after a long absence. Daily cruises in the morning and afternoon are priced at about £8.50. From the boat, you can enjoy some of Rome's most famous sights and architecture.

□ Cricketer Holidays (01892 664242) is offering a one-bedroom, self-catering apartment holiday on the Colleslungo Estate in the Chianti region of Tuscany. A 14-day stay, from April 30-May 14, including return flights from Heathrow to Pisa, car hire for 12 days, insurance and a day trip to Florence costs £1,139.

□ Watercolour painting holidays are available from Simply Italy (0181-995 8277). Staying in a traditional farmhouse in the Tuscan hills, seven nights costs £830 per person, including half-board accommodation with wine, trips to Lucca and Florence, painting tuition, transfers and entrance fees. Flights are not included. Departs April 27.

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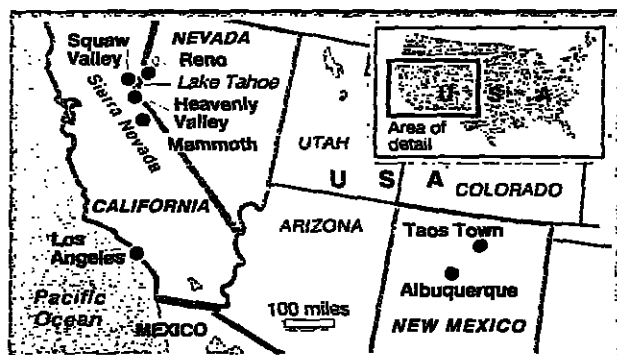
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10

TRAVEL

SKIING: America's sunshine states are opening up to the British

Sloping off to the west



The middle-aged Texan on the chairlift at the Taos Ski Valley resort in New Mexico had just arrived. "Eleven hours out of Fort Worth," he drawled. "The kids were at the wheel. Go to sleep, Dad," they said. "You'll be skiing in the morning."

And so was I, 15 hours out of Garwick by Continental Airlines via Houston to Albuquerque, then two hours by Steve Plowden-Wardlaw's 4WD to his Quail Ridge Inn just outside Taos town. The inn is, in fact, the reception and restaurant headquarters of a complex of low, motel-style apartments set around a swimming pool, Jacuzzi, tennis courts and all that is necessary to keep the American holidaymakers happy.

Later, as my host guided me round the mountains, he told tales of Ernie Blake, a German-born Swiss, who turned from the interrogation of Nazi war criminals to the development of his idea of the perfect ski area. Set in America's fourth largest state, which has a population of only 1.25 million, Taos's strength lies in its remoteness.

Only now, with the tour company Ski the American Dream promoting the Quail Ridge Inn and the Kandahar Apartments, is Taos opening up to serious British skiers. They are welcome to do what I did — a heart-pounding trudge up Highline Ridge and a descent leftwards in untracked snow through the trees.

Half of Taos's 72 slopes are for advanced skiers. The night life is low-key, but you need your energies for the skiing.

Too soon, I was off west again, by the no-frills Southwest Airline from Albuquerque, and a three-and-a-half-hour flight via Las Vegas (total cost \$77, about £50), to Reno, Nevada. Squaw Valley is a further hour's drive around the north of Lake Tahoe. The

Ski fact file

- The author was a guest of Continental Airlines (01293 776464); Taos Ski Valley resort and the Quail Ridge Inn, New Mexico; the Squaw Valley and Heavenly Valley resorts; the Inn by the Lake, South Lake Tahoe; Mammoth Mountain resort and the Alpenglow Lodge.
- British operators serving American ski resorts include Virgin (01293 61718), Crystal (0181-399 5144), Inghams (0181-780 4444), Ski the American Dream (0181-552 1201), Ski Independence (0131-557 8855) and Skiworld (0171-602 7444).

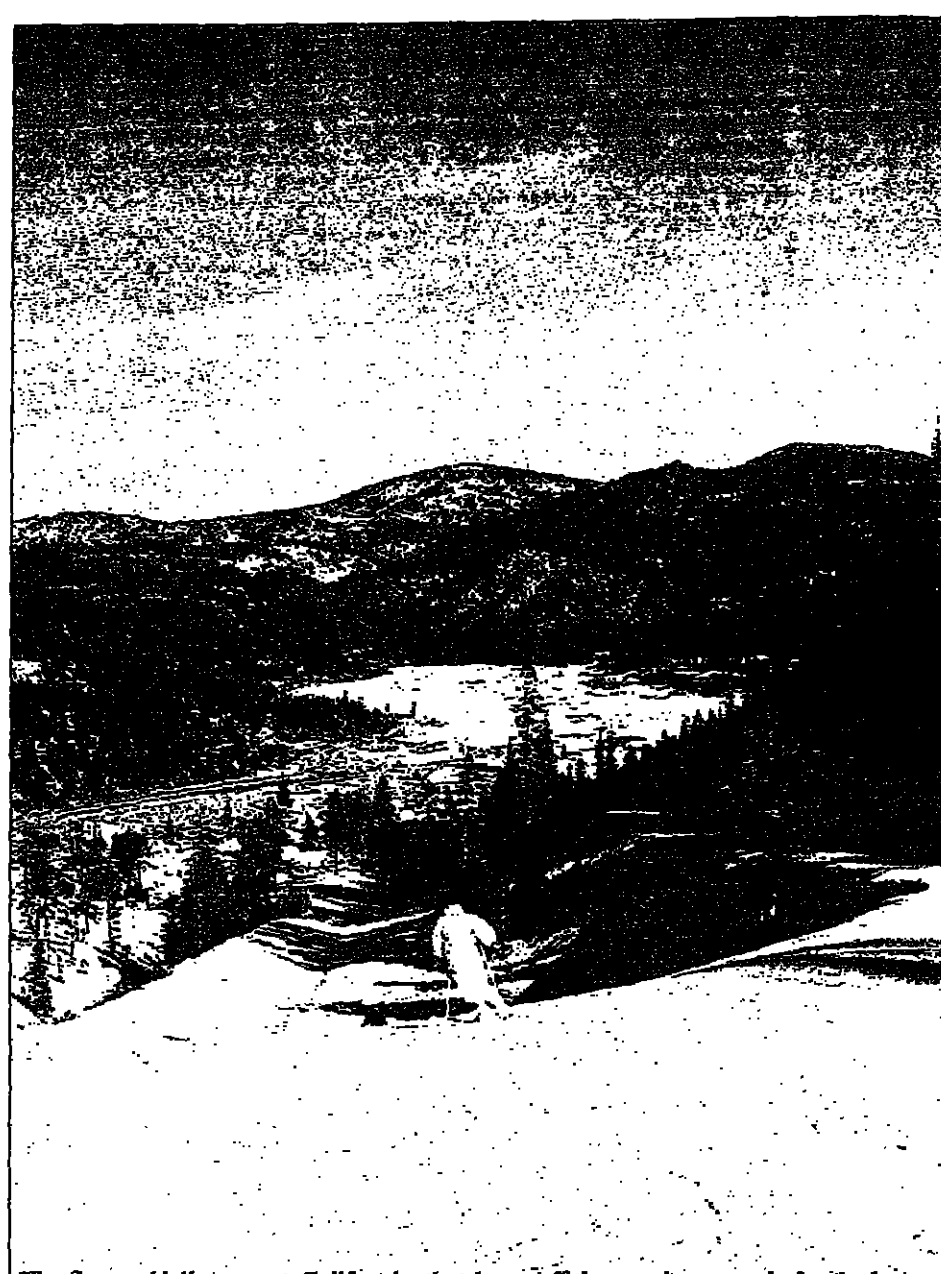
California-Nevada state border bisects the lake, an azure oval 22 miles long and up to 1,350ft deep. Dotted around this oasis are 14 ski resorts, the largest being Squaw Valley to the northwest, and Heavenly Valley to the southeast.

Squaw is decidedly Californian, its image created by the 1960 Winter Olympics. Heavenly rises above straggling lakeside developments and multistorey, all-night gaming hotels ablaze with lights.

Squaw has six peaks enfolding the plateau of High Camp like a vast armchair. It has something of Chamonix's aura, and the slopes off the cornice are only for the brave.

As elsewhere in America, there are less intimidating alternatives, and at High Camp beginners have the luxury of a high mountain pasture, while non-skiers can ice-skate, bungee-jump, swim or soak up the scenery.

Night skiing is a Squaw speciality. Tom Kelly once coached the Canadian Mahre twins, Phil and Steve, to World Cup triumph by getting them up so early that they were in top form before the Austrians had even woken up. Here, as a



The Squaw Valley resort, California: the slopes off the cornice are only for the brave

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 27

- BUNKIE
(b) One who shares a bunk with another, a common practice in the Middle Ages that still survives, at least for some Tory MPs. (US colloquialism.)
- FAVISM
a) A hereditary form of anaemia manifested surprisingly only after contact with broad-beans. French beans will not do it. (From the Italian adjective *favismo*.) *Dorland's Medical Dictionary* cites this as a "disease of Italy caused by the eating of the bean *Vicia fabia*".
- GRIFFE
(b) A claw-shaped ornament carved at the angle of the square base of a column; a spur. (Shortened from the form *Griffen*.) The 1901 *Dictionary of Architecture* promises that: "The griffe is often used for elaborate ornamentation, being carved into vegetable or even animal form."
- BELLUM
(c) A small boat or canoe used in ports along the shores of the Persian Gulf. (From the Persian *balam*.)

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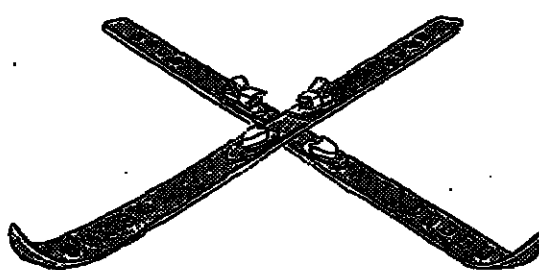
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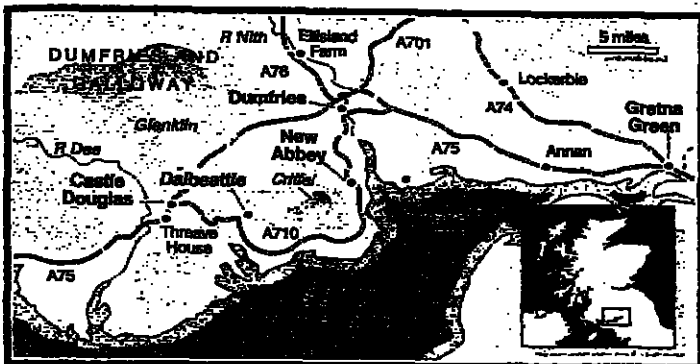
مكتبة الأمل

TRAVEL

11

SCOTLAND: The countryside which was the inspiration for the national bard and much of his poetry

One often yearns for the land of Burns



Art for the people is a common cry, but in one small corner of southwest Scotland they are more populist than that. There's art, possibly worth millions of pounds, which is viewed daily by many more sheep and buzzards than human beings.

Dotted around the moors of Glenkiln, a remote valley just north of the main road from Dumfries to the port of Stranraer, are three sculptures by Henry Moore, one by Jacob Epstein and another by Auguste Rodin. Open to the elements, they stand free on heather-clad hills and by bracken-lined roads running through land owned by the Keswick estate. The late Sir William Keswick began his collection in 1950, the first time Henry Moore had seen his work in a landscape setting.

The sheep, which outnumber the local population by tens if not hundreds to one, are not in awe. "What a critic," said a shepherd as one of his flock left a small deposit at the base of a Moore figure beside Corrie Bridge.

Robert Burns, Scotland's national poet, would have approved of the setting. Although he was a man of the people, he hobnobbed with the aristocracy and would applaud

the contrast of high art with humble but noble places. The surrounding countryside was the inspiration for much of his poetry.

Although Ayrshire claims Burns as its son — he was born there — the region of Dumfries and Galloway to the south does likewise on the ground that it was here that he was at his most creative and productive in his short life. Millions of people, Japanese and Russians among them, sing *Auld Lang Syne* every year, but not everyone knows who wrote it.

The rivalry heats up with the approach of July 31, 1996, the 200th anniversary of the poet's death, aged just 37. Bicentennial celebrations will be well under way by Burns Night, the traditional annual ritual which marks his birth on January 25. Inevitably, a Burns Trail has been created, which runs through some of the most beautiful and unknown parts of Scotland. Burns was not averse to a drink (or women either) and there are pubs and hostels aplenty en route, all claiming an association with him.

Who knows, perhaps they were howls — meeting places with drink on tap — where he penned some of the recently discovered cache of 40 or so poems attributed to him. It all helps this year's "Rabbiefest". Hag-



Fact file

- The author was a guest of the Dumfries and Galloway Tourist Board, Campbell House, Bankend Road, Dumfries DG1 4TH (01387 250434).
- He stayed at Barend Holiday Village, Sandyhills, Dalbeattie, Kirkcudbrightshire DG5 4NU (01387 780663). Prices for self-catering chalets range from £150 sleeping four in January to £530 sleeping six in August.
- The John Buchan Society, 16 Ramfury Road, Bridge of Weir, Renfrewshire PA11 3EL (01505 613116).
- Christopher Harvie's introduction to the Oxford University Press World Classics edition of *The Thirty-nine Steps* by John Buchan (£3.99) outlines Richard Hannay's probable route over the Galloway moors.

Left: Henry Moore's *King and Queen* had pride of place on the moors of Glenkiln, but it was vandalised last year and is being repaired

Cock-a-leekie soup

A CLASSIC Scottish soup, regularly served at Burns suppers. The debate is whether or not to include prunes.

- 1 boiling fowl or chicken, 2-3lb
- 1 onion, quartered
- 1-2lb leeks, chopped into inch-long pieces
- 4pts beef or veal stock
- bay leaf
- parsley
- salt, pepper
- 6-12 prunes, soaked overnight (optional)

Place the bird in a large pot with the onion and stock. Bring to the boil, skim and simmer until tender, about two hours, topping up with water if necessary.

Remove the bird and let it cool slightly. Add the green part of the leeks (and prunes, if wanted) and continue to simmer.

Cut white meat off chicken into small pieces and return to the pot with white parts of remaining leeks.

Simmer for a further ten minutes or so. Check seasoning and serve.



Robert Burns: bicentennial celebrations are under way

gis is not compulsory. A far lesser poet wrote:

One often yearns
For the land of Burns
But the only snag is
The haggis.

"Unfair. It's wonderful," says Frank Gourlay, proprietor of Barend holiday village, a group of Scandinavian-style chalets near the coast of the Solway Firth, which was the centre for our intensive introduction to Burns. It lies 20

miles south west of Dumfries, the country town where the ploughman poet lived for the last six years of his life after unsuccessfully farming near by. The Burns Trail takes in Ellisland farm where, walking along the banks of the River Nith, he wrote *Tam O'Shanter*. There are museums, hotels, pubs, houses he lived in, places he visited, many of them kitted out with the whole visitor centre caboodle, audio-visual presentations, tea-towels and all.

One of his favourite watering holes was the Globe Inn, Dumfries. Farmers gathered at the inn, or howl, to do business, so it was natural for Burns to go there on market days. As the evening wore on, the talk would turn to song, mirth and verse — the forerunner to annual Burns suppers.

There is no need to overdose on Burns in Dumfries and Galloway. The district's countryside and coastline are ideal for birdwatching, angling, cycling, rambling,

forest drives and wildfowl shooting. There are magnificent gardens such as Threave, near Castle Douglas, a garden for all seasons but splendid in springtime when its daffodil-carpeted slopes would have had Wordsworth reaching for his pen to knock off an extra verse. Castles, such as 13th-century, moated Caerlaverock, and ruins such as Sweetheart Abbey, just as old, are among the country's finest.

Other literary detectives find clues in these parts. It was across the desolate Galloway moors that Richard Hannay, the hero of John Buchan's *The Thirty-nine Steps*, was hunted by police and spies. Russell Paterson, secretary of the John Buchan Society, says: "Members occasionally try to follow in Hannay's footsteps. There are only six genuine local Scottish place names in the book, but there are sufficient topographical references to fill in the gaps."

And at the gateway to Scotland's south west is Gretna Green, famous for runaway marriages at the blacksmith's shop.

Within strolling distance of the chalets at Barend are a restaurant and bar, heated swimming pool and Jacuzzi, horse-riding and pony-

trekking, trout fishing in a well-stocked loch, and a nine-hole golf course. Within 20 miles are a dozen 18-hole courses.

For energetic enthusiasts of wonderful views, climb to the top of the granite mass of Criffel. At less than 2000ft it's no mountain, but impressive all the same because it skirts the sea. On a clear day you can look south across the Solway Firth to the Cumbrian coast and the Lakeland hills beyond, and to Carlisle and the Border hills of southern Scotland to the east. After it rains, a quartzite outcrop shines so brightly that it is known locally as "the diamond". And afterwards, in the snug bar of the Criffel Inn at New Abbey, a glass of Broughton Bitter tastes all the better.

Tippenny ale tasted good, too, at our Burns supper at the Globe Inn. The haggis was piped in, addressed and served with tarties and neeps. There were toasts, recitations and speeches. A tenor, accompanied by an accordionist, sang melancholy airs. We all sang *For a Thatch and a' That*. Whisky was followed by claret, then more whisky. It was a good evening. Those who survived the course tell me it got better and better. You have been warned.

ALASDAIR RILEY

Russian Waterways of the Golden Ring

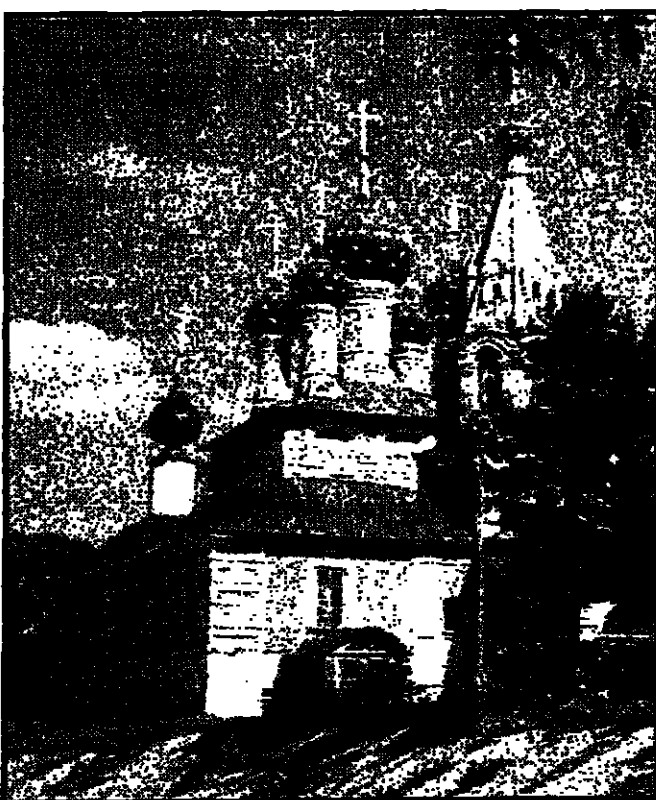
The opening of the waterways between St Petersburg and Moscow allows us to link a visit to two great cities with a relaxing cruise that travels the Neva River, Lake Ladoga, the Svir River, Lake Onega, the Baltic Canal, White Lake, the Volga River and finally the Moscow and Volga Canal. This intricate system of waterways has a beauty that is hard to describe. Serene, peaceful and timeless with silver birch and pine forests, sandy shores, calm flowing water and spectacular late sunsets, in these realms of the "White Nights" Calls will be at such historic towns as Uglich, where the blue cupolas decorated with the golden stars of the riverside church make a stunning landmark.

For many the visit to Kizhi Island in Lake Onega will be the highlight of the waterway journey. Here the magnificent Church of the Transfiguration with its 22 shimmering grey domes in three tiers are more than a match for the fairy tale splendour of Moscow's St Basil's. From here we cruise through the fascinating waterway system through Goritsy to the cities of the Golden Ring, stopping at Yaroslavl and Uglich on the mighty Volga. These magical cities of Holy Russia still preserve their medieval ivories, fortified monasteries and churches, in surroundings remote from the modern world.

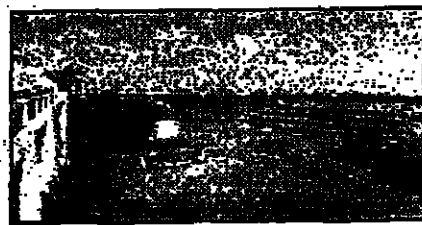
For this journey we have selected the MS Karamzin which, although not as high a standard as our other vessels the MVR Kirov, offers very good facilities considering the competitive tariff. This is especially relevant in view of the high hotel prices now applied in Russia due to the westernisation of the hotels. This tour will therefore appeal to those wishing to see unspoilt parts of Russia from an economical and comfortable base.

The MS Karamzin

This comfortable, well-maintained ship was built in Germany and partially renovated this year. All cabins are outside with large picture windows (except those on the Lower Deck that have portholes), private shower, toilet and individual temperature control. The ship is fully air-conditioned. The bright, pleasant restaurant has windows on three sides offering views as you dine. Cuisine (Russian and Continental) is adapted to western taste. There is a main lounge/bar with live music, several more lounges, a souvenir shop, beauty shop and ample deck space. Laundry service is available and a medical doctor is on board. As the ship is now under Western management, you can



linking St Petersburg with Moscow along the quiet rivers, lakes and canals of Russia on the MS Karamzin - 10 nights from £695.00



expect many upgraded amenities (including quality towels, soap, toilet paper, coffee) and better food, service, cruise director and staff.

Itinerary

Day 1 Depart from London Gatwick by air to St Petersburg. Drive to the MS Karamzin which will moor in St Petersburg for two nights.

Day 2 In the morning a sightseeing tour of the city will include the Fortress of St Peter and St Paul.

Day 3 Visit the Hermitage Museum in the morning. Afternoon visit to Pushkin, the blue and gold rococo palace designed for the Empress Elizabeth by

Rastrelli. In the afternoon explore St Petersburg. Sail in the evening.

Day 4 Svir Story - the day is spent leisurely cruising Lake Ladoga and the Svir River stopping at the village of Svir Story, a quaint riverside village.

Day 5 Kizhi Island - sail across Lake Onega to Kizhi Island. A tour will encompass some splendid examples of 18th-century Russian architecture including typical wooden churches, houses with early barns and a windmill.

Day 6 Goritsy - sail along the Baltic Canal and across White Lake to the town of Goritsy to visit the well-preserved Kirill-Belozersk Monastery.

Day 7 Yaroslavl - a city sightseeing tour will include the churches of the Kromskiy overlooking the Volga and fine examples of the town's 16th-century architecture.

Day 8 Cruise along the Volga to Uglich. Founded in the 12th century, it was here that Ivan the Terrible's youngest son, Dmitri, was murdered. We visit the Church of St Demetrius, built on the spot where his body was found. On our walking tour we will also see the medieval Kremlin. Sail in the evening towards Moscow.

Day 9 Sail along the River Moskva reaching Moscow itself in the late morning. A city tour is arranged for the afternoon.

Day 10 Morning city tour of Moscow including the sights such as Red Square, St Basil's Cathedral and the Kremlin.

Day 11 Transfer to the airport for the flight to Calcutta.

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A 14-night itinerary is also available at a supplement of £240 per person on the following dates: May 25 (ex. Moscow), June 8 (ex. St Petersburg), August 3 (ex. Moscow) and August 17 (ex. St Petersburg). Please contact us for further details.

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12

BOOKS

The chinless blunder on

Why an editor must be a midwife

Cheers, it's a book

Every week hundreds of thousands of readers buy a book believing that it sprang direct from the author's brain onto the printed page. Would that it were so straightforward.

The trouble with dealing with writers is that you cannot second-guess them. People say that commissioning editors are the midwives of literature but at least labour has its own more-or-less unvarying timetable. The gestation of a work of literature can be 24 hours (the 24-Hour Novel-Writing Prize). 18 years (*Finnegans Wake*) or several centuries (the Bible). So what exactly does a commissioning editor have to do to get a completed, perfectly honed typescript on his or her desk and ready to go into production?

If you are really lucky, absolutely nothing. The work is submitted, reading it is a pure pleasure and all that remains is to cut a deal.

At the other extreme, desperate measures are required. Some writers sign a contract without telling you of their little

problem with writer's block. And for every one who cannot start, there is another who cannot stop.

Coaxing a typescript from an author whose interpretation of a deadline is considerably more flexible than your own can be taxing. One of my authors needed me to edit his chapters as they were written. Under pressure of a tight publishing schedule, I had to interrupt a holiday to return to London to read the latest instalment. This was the only way to encourage him to speed on to the next.

Another author, in the throes of composition, needed daily home visits. When these were not getting us there quickly enough, I had to install a freelance editor to spend her days, and most of her evenings, strong-arming the author into producing the book. No midwife has it harder.

Such are the extremes, but commissioning any book — from a synopsis or an idea — is an act of faith. You believe in the thing and you believe in its author, but there follows a long and anxious wait. When at last

the finished opus thuds onto your desk, the early pages are turned with a mixture of hope and dread. What if it does not live up to your expectations? Have you and the author been talking about the same thing? What if it is dire?

Sometimes — rarely — it is. That conversation about totally rewriting those 100,000 words is not something to look forward to. I can only remember having to do it four times and on each occasion I was fortunate, since all four authors, though upset, took it on the chin and rewrote. And in each case they substantially improved their novels.

Some writers take no notice of what their editor says. They have worked long and hard and every word to them is sacrosanct. They may be right. But books that cannot be improved on delivery to their publishers are few, and here a creative relationship between author and editor is paramount.

Offices are not conducive to careful reading so editors do much of their work out of hours. However, there are pitfalls in having manuscripts around the house. My sons tore up part of one for hamster bedding. A friend and her lover — both publishers — went to sleep in the middle of reading their separate manuscripts and woke up with an indistinguishable muddle of unnumbered pages.

It is also essential to be ready for the totally unexpected. The phone call from Portugal at 11.30pm to correct a single word. The sudden trip to Switzerland to confront the author with a negative label report. And, worst of all, the author who does a runner, advance in pocket.

The Snipecock & Tweed stereotype has it that publishing is a breeze and that you spend all your time on long lunches, networking and talking to New York. If that is publishing, it is not editing. The trouble is, in the literary labour ward, no one can hear you scream.

FANNY BLAKE

● The author was the editorial director at Viking Penguin from 1990 to 1995.

OH NO. Justina FitzOdo is young, beautiful, talented and unhappy. She has a voice like a lark and pre-Raphaelite hair which tends to tumble abstractedly across her face. On page 1 she forsakes her job and her singing abilities for a miserable marriage to an undeserving philanderer called Digby. Then she hums and haws and hums and haws and hums... and on page 320 she finally does something about it.

In the meantime, you have long since worked out what is going to happen and in all likelihood grown bored by the procrastination of this silly, boring, bland piece of female nothingness masquerading as a tragicomic heroine. Suffice it to say that pasts are faced and confronted, secrets

Mary Loudon is aghast to find the snobbish, vacuous formula writing of the 1980s extant

■ UNHOLY HARMONIES
By Elizabeth Pewsey
Sceptre, £16.99

discovered, fortunes left to the beautiful and the deserving, sexual desire unleashed and everyone is fulfilled in the town of Unthra.

I thought they had stopped publishing this sort of drivel in the early 1980s: for *Unholy Harmonies*, just like the 1980s, is as snobbish, as fanciful, as absurd and as socially loaded as they come. Take a look at the names of the

characters for a start. There's Justina, of course, and Magdalena, Lydia, Alban, Geneva, Zephania, Sylvester and so on. And those are only the upper-middle-class characters.

There is also a vicar called Holigost. The cleaner is called Mrs Toadflax, and the female publican, Mrs Herb. The characters with the pony names use words such as divine, irksome, luscious, beastly, tiresome, dire and jolly. Mrs Herb says things such as "aye" and "nowt". Mrs Toadflax does not say anything.

And the prose? The trick of good writing is to show, not to tell; to suggest, not to insist. The trouble with Elizabeth Pewsey's writing is that she does precisely the opposite: it is as if she is too lazy or too unimaginative to illustrate what she wants to describe, as if she thinks that taking her word for everything is good enough, and moreover, that her clichéd and snobbish tone will not cause offence.

I am afraid *Unholy Harmonies* is what some people call an easy read and what I call "shopping-list" writing. It is so easy, so bland and oh, so boring. Please, please, Elizabeth Pewsey, write something else, because it is an old story and it has been better told before.

Hostages to the silence

■ A MAIDEN'S GRAVE
By Jeffrey Deaver
Hodder & Stoughton, £12

IN Jeffrey Deaver's new thriller Arthur Potter, an all-too-human, ageing, widowed FBI negotiator, runs up against the most careful killer of his career, holed up in a slaughterhouse with eight young girls and their two female teachers. The killer is partnered by his stoat-like second-in-command and an obese serial rapist. As a further complication, this is no ordinary school party; all save one hysterical older teacher, are deaf.

Not since *Children of a Lesser God* has there been such a moving, and in this case unequivocally unpatronising, depiction of the world of the Deaf, which they themselves spell with a capital D as a socio-political statement. As his reluctant heroine, Melanie, puts it: "I'm Deaf with attitude".

But where this book really sings is in the psychology: Potter's self-conscious exploitation of his own emotional vulnerability to empathise with the hostage-taker. His skill is to descend with the potential killer to a mutual resignation, while avoiding the danger of empathy turning into sympathy.

Aided by high technology but hindered by a host of interferences, Potter must tease the hostages free one by one without drawing blood. Deaver knits a seamless fabric of tightening tension right up to an explosive double-whammy ending.

A *Maiden's Grave* is a gripping, human literary fugue that ends with a brilliant sleight of hand and an explosive punctuation mark. It is Deaver's best book yet.

PETER MILLAR



Dragging their tails behind them: *Lost sheep in a lane, Millhams, Devon* from *A Corner of England: North Devon landscapes and people* by James Ravillious (Devon Books, £19.95), selected from 17 years of photography

Phantom of a rural soap opera

BURTHORPE is an unremarkable little village, typical both of East Anglia, and a certain sort of satirical English fiction. For the outsider, it does a passable imitation as the duller place on earth, but of course it has its own dramas: the squire is having an affair with the editor of the local paper, but only loves his dying dog; the undertaker has secret ambitions to expand his funeral home and secret trysts with the local estate agent; the village shop-keeper has paedophilic tendencies.

New Age travellers and new property developments threaten further to blight its already limited charms. Its inhabitants seem constantly engaged in either sexual or civic battle.

■ REVENANCY
By Terence Blacker
Bloomsbury, £15.99

Into all this, like the Lone Ranger, rides Margaret Cooper. She is a pretty, elfin little thing, wearing slightly odd, trendy clothes. All the men fancy her. They think she is in her late twenties. In fact, she is about 500.

Terence Blacker has created an Aga Spectre. Margaret is really Meg, the ill-used mistress of the Tudor poet John Skelton. Her soul has been restless since her suicide in the early 16th century: now she has materialised to find love, and she goes through Burthorpe like the Terminator in her attempt to get it. For



Blacker: ghost of change

those who cross or merely offend her, she has a variety of punishments: some men are burnt alive, a few women are cursed with green menstrual blood. Margaret is the mistress of the untimely end.

As well as having an ambitious undertaker to clean up the mess, Burthorpe also, fortunately, boasts a thanatologist who can translate it all. The term "revenance" is his invention: it can mean "a return from the dead" as well as "something pleasing, memorable, attractive".

This is not in any way a thriller of the supernatural. It may have the same final body count as that of a Stephen King novel, but there is absolutely none of the horror. Instead, Blacker has written a deft and entertaining tale of a village which needs to change, and where it takes a ghost to make things happen.

GILL HORNBY

ERICA WAGNER

Two cases of whisky worth £480 to be won

Today *The Times* brings you the opportunity to buy tickets for one of the most important events in the world of bridge. The Macallan International Bridge Pairs Championship, in association with *The Times*, with the chance to win a superb case of Macallan whisky.

There are two first prizes, each consisting of 12 bottles of The Macallan 10 Years Old malt whisky, each worth approximately £22.

There are also 20 runners-up prizes of Macallan playing cards and miniature bottles of The Macallan 10 Years Old.

The Macallan International Bridge Pairs Championship is regarded by many as the most prestigious event in the bridge calendar and the one which all players most aspire to win.

Now in its 25th year, the championship will be held next Wednesday, Thursday and Friday in London, when thirty-two of the world's top names will be playing, including bridge's most famous player, Omar Sharif.

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Klavan: jazzy language

Among dead puppets

■ AGNES MALLORY
By Andrew Klavan
Little, Brown, £15.99

LUCKY Harry Bernard. Nice blonde wife, adorable kid, an apartment on Central Park West and a promising career as a lawyer-in-shining-armour, rooting out corruption in the New York political machine. What more could he possibly want?

Why, Agnes Mallory, of course. Or Agnes Sole, as he knew her when he was a nine-year-old and she was a witchy wood-sprite, telling him tales of a half-sister who died in the Holocaust and modelling skulls out of Playdoh. Agnes, whose mother was beautiful where Harry's was not, and who knew the names of all the stars — even though it was Harry's father who had wanted to be an astronomer.

Andrew Klavan's latest novel is an intriguing mongrel of a book, part mystery, part ghost story, and partly a disturbing evocation of the power of childhood memories. Agnes haunts Harry while she lives, and she haunts him after her death, when he vanishes from his previous life, a victim of his eidetic recollection of their past. He almost seems like a ghost himself ("in the old days, when people still said things to me"). It is a mysterious, eerily familiar visitor who drags his tale from him, and what emerges is not just a tale of childhood friendship gone wrong, but of a woman overshadowed by a past she cannot control, tainting her whole life with its "aura of obscure misery".

Klavan's language is jazzy and arresting, full of shocking and visceral images. The vacancy of a body after death makes him see life as nothing more than a puppet show: "a puppet show done with corpses". Klavan lets horror reveal truth. He is not afraid to venture into Harry's swiftest, most uncensored thoughts, the "Inner Man" who wants it all and does not care how he gets it. But Harry does not care what we think of him. It is this that makes him likeable, even if he is weak, a crook, a schmuck.

But for all his faults, Harry loved Agnes Mallory — not just her quick, hard body but her tormented soul, too; surely her maiden name is no coincidence.

This is a flawed novel; its initial long passages of italics are confusing, and it has, at times, the jumbled quality of real memory. But this lends it authenticity too. And Agnes haunts the reader: that is no small feat.

No short measure

THE *Story Library Series* (Kingfisher, £9.99 hbk, £4.99 pbk each) is an enlightened collection of anthologies for older teenagers, arranged by theme. In *Fantasy Stories*, compiled by Diana Wynne Jones, herself an inventive fantasy writer, we have a series of extracts from almost forgotten one-time favourites. You could call it a rescue job.

The *Amazing Flight of the Gump* by L. Frank Baum, for instance, is well worth rescuing. It comes from *The Land of Oz*, Baum's companion to *The Wizard of Oz*, in which an army of girl soldiers takes over the emerald city.

Una and the Red Cross Knight, by Andrew Lang, is another treat, showing the effects of an unscheduled dragon on the lives of seemingly "fortunate people to whom nothing ever happens".

Atmospherically illustrated in black and white by Robin Lawrie, the collection contains 18 stories by fantasy writers, including C.S. Lewis's *The Silver Chair* and Elizabeth Goudge's *Henrietta's House*.

True Stories, compiled by Anthony Masters, proves that there are many forms of courage. Some of the people in this collection, such as Charles

Lindbergh and Clare Francis, deliberately sought out danger. Others, such as Colonel Archibald Gracie on the *Titanic*, Pauline Cutting in the Palestinian refugee camps and — particularly riveting — Dian Fossey, whose protection of the African gorillas that she came to study ended in her murder, behaved heroically when thrown into adverse circumstances.

Being squeamish, I did not particularly go for *Gabriel-Ernest*, Sak's disquieting classic of a cannibalistic werewolf boy, nor John Steinbeck's of the bubble gum that chewed back, but these and other stories give *Horror Stories*, chosen by Susan Price, an enjoyable aura of respectability. For 9 to 14-year-olds, is an important part of growing up, and *Best of Friends*, edited by Valerie Bearman (Methuen, £9.99), contains eight specially commissioned stories from contemporary writers such as Theresa Breslin and Robert Westall on a subject which can provide some of the best and worst days in the life of an 8 to 13-year-old.

MAUREEN OWEN

هكذا من الأصل

BOOKS

13

America lost the war but the Vietnamese lost much, much more, says Tunku Varadarajan

Vietnam, a victor's tragedy



A survivor's tale: Dachau's liberation on May 3, 1945

SACRED GAMES
By Gerald Jacobs
Penguin, £6.99

CAN WE speak the unspeakable? Miklos Hammer spent 40 years being unable to speak about his experiences in the Nazi death camps. He could not even tell his wife, whom he met after the war, about what he had endured in Dachau, Buchenwald and Auschwitz. His memories had, in effect, rendered him speechless: there were simply things about which he could say nothing. There was also an element of guilt as Primo Levi has made poignantly clear, the survivor is in a certain sense ashamed of his survival. He can never forget those he left behind.

Hammer eventually decided to share his story with Gerald Jacobs of the *Jewish Chronicle*. Born in Hungary in 1920, he grew up in a studiously devout household (his father was a rabbi), part

of the thriving central European Jewish culture that was swallowed up in the Nazi storm. Hammer hoped to become a doctor; but his studies were interrupted by the war, and in 1941 he was conscripted into the *Arbeitsdienst*, the Jewish labour brigade. Three years later he found himself in what George Steiner has called "the final hell" of Auschwitz.

Hammer says he owes his life to an Englishman, Peter Howard, whom he met by chance on a train bound for Dachau but who disappeared during the journey. Thanks to this, Hammer was able to assume Howard's identity and thus avoided being rounded up and murdered with the other Jews on the train.

This book, which bears witness to unspeakable suffering, is a moving testament to astonishing bravery and fortitude.

WE HAVE lived with America's Vietnam memory for more than 20 years. The Americans fought there, and got caned, but made sure to thrust upon the rest of the world their intense post-bellum trauma. Hollywood and a conveyor belt of G.I. Viet Lit have replayed the war from every angle: no audience has been spared. Yet one perspective has been denied to us consistently: "the other side". What was it like for the soldiers of the Vietnam?

The Vietnamese have their hearts into their mouths a little less easily than do the Americans. Inherent reticence, deep battle scars and years of one-party rule have all conspired against the emergence of a Vietnamese literature of war. Now, a writer of rare refinement, a woman who herself spent seven years on the front line in the "American war", has tilted the bitter balance a little in her country's favour.

Novel Without A Name, by Duong Thu Huong, had first to be smuggled out of Vietnam. The author, an advocate of democratic reform, has been imprisoned and muzzled by the regime in Hanoi. They did not like the book and it is easy to see why.

The novel is, foremost, about the futility of the war — about the waste of lives, relationships and passion. But it is not a tract. So stripped of heroism is the depiction of battle, hunger and injury that

NOVEL WITHOUT A NAME
By Duong Thu Huong
Picador, £5.99

no sensitive Vietnamese could have read it and failed to ask prickly questions about the country's pyrrhic victory. Quan, the novel's main character, is a kind of special Everyman. The book describes his journey on furlough from the front line to his home village, towards the end of the war. His task is to accompany a childhood friend, Bien, who has been maddened by combat, to the comfort of an upcountry regiment. The slow, tormented journey — his odyssey — takes him through the landscape of a scorched country.

Quan travels, also, through the geography of his imagination, trawling through childhood memories of play and love, of the day he enlisted for the glory of the party, of battles past and comrades dead. And the author, all the while, weaves threads from the present — the pleasures of a can of Chinese meat, the pathetic advances of a widowed woman, a gift from the front of a comb made of aircraft metal — into the fabric of his recollections. The future for Quan, in the end, is but a heap of bitterness from the past. Duong Thu Huong has written a story to cherish. Nothing in the canon of American literature on Vietnam can match it.



Blindfolded and bound, a female Vietnamese suspect is taken away by an American soldier after Operation Mallard, a round-up preceded by heavy bombing, in 1966

First flurries of snow to come

THE COUNTRY AHEAD OF US, THE COUNTRY BEHIND
By David Guterson
Bloomsbury, £5.99

THE MANY admirers of last year's excellent *Snow Falling on Cedars* — still at No 1 in the *Times* paperback chart — will be glad to see this earlier collection of short stories from David Guterson as they wait for his next novel to appear. These stories were published in America six years ago but already display the fine touch of the later book.

A broad landscape stretches out through the stories, of creeks and canyons, dust paths and sage deserts, birch groves and fir forests. The quiet assurance and clean detail of Guterson's prose make his subjects appear true and compelling — in *Snow Falling on Cedars* there was salmon fishing and strawberry picking; here he traces the careful rituals of duck shooting and camping out by the lakes in America's Northwest.

His scenes are built up through keen attention to their most evocative elements, making them thoroughly present to the mind's eye: "Along the strip of autumnal, shameless motels, hunters loaded gear in lots, lit by running lights, steam spewing from their mouths. The dogs circling just beyond the fires, the bald fences enclosing vacant guest pools, the last of the good willow beneath lonesome heavens." Visual power is drawn from the unexpected sequence of images he has chosen — willow leaves followed by slaughterhouses.

THERE are no big dramas, no pitched battles here, just marriages that gradually run down, men who grow older, small but formative misunderstandings, pauses for reflection — the stuff of Raymond Carver. As with Carver, Guterson never shows all his hand; there is a sense that his material is pared back from a far larger resource, leaving much unsaid. When his characters suffer moments of emotional intensity for which they are unable to find words, attention rests instead on external details that consequently become charged with significance — the windscreen wipers, the road ahead, a flight of birds.

Undercurrents are betrayed by a single physical gesture — the grandfather who realises his hunting days are over and wordlessly leaves his gun behind in his son's car, the Vietnam veteran who finishes off a wounded bird, unable to watch it suffer. In the silence, the dialogue is spare and efficient; indeed the only character in the book who says too much soon regrets it, in the opening story.

These ten brief pieces confirm Guterson's sure instinct as a writer with the gift of making good prose look just so easy.

LIBBY PURVES HARRIET PATERSON

BEING DIGITAL
By Nicholas Negroponte
Coronet, £6.99

AN EXCELLENT layman's guide to the high-tech future. *Being Digital* explains the basics of the world's new computer and telecommunications systems, from bits and bandwidth to CD-Roms and interface design. Negroponte, director of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Media Studies Lab and columnist for *Wired* magazine, writes with informed intelligence and lively clarity, criticising dumb industrial developments and, though not dwelling on the dark side, throwing up big cultural questions. His predictions of ear-ring-sized PCs and video recorders that tape programmes on your selected subject are at once thrilling and unsettling. A must for technophobes.



DREAMERS
By Elaine Feinstein
Pan, £6.99

IN THE WAKE of the 1848 Vienna uprising, two bright Jewish children escape a meagre living in a suburban ghetto. But, as their ways part, their fortunes change. Joseph, who played the violin for pennies in a café, becomes a celebrated virtuoso, while Clara grows into an independent-spirited young teacher. But Joseph's affairs with glittering sopranos serve only to emphasise his loneliness, and Clara, dismayed by various brutish assaults on her virtue, resolves to remain chaste for ever. Whatever could they both be yearning for? An up-market bodice-ripper, with cameo appearances by Brahms, Strauss and Heine.



ADOLF'S REVENGE
By Lynne Alexander
Albion, £8.99

ADOLF is a Jewish boy in a well-connected Englishman's ("The Prince") lures Chick, the niece she dotes upon, across the Atlantic. But when he finally dumps her, Adolf's fury knows no bounds and she attempts revenge. A fairly straightforward story, you might think, of a nice Jewish girl who marries out — but not in the hands of this richly inventive writer. Lynne Alexander uses resonant, biblical language to create a fantastic world of characters as grotesque and funny as those of Günter Grass. A tale of power and manipulation, that deals in raw emotions and pokes fun at predictable happy endings.

Contributors: Jason Cowley, Kate Bassett, Nicki Household, Hazel Leslie

Faith, hope and pious gravity

ANGELS AND MEN
By Catherine Fox
Hamish Hamilton, £16

CATHERINE FOX sets her first novel in the heart of a cathedral city but she has more in common with a feminist Christian novelist such as Sara Maillard than with Anthony Trollope. The comedy that flows from the social and political structures of Anglicanism is not her subject. Instead *Angels and Men* follows a year in the life of a postgraduate student, Mara Johns, as she studies women and fanaticism and struggles to free herself from the horror of her twin sister's disastrous involvement with a religious cult.

Mara is a child of the Church of England, daughter of a rural dean, and on the surface she is enjoying the prolonged, privileged adolescence of the English middle classes. But Mara is numbed by her sister's tragedy, and by a sense of rejection which stems from childhood.

Fox makes Mara the focus of the novel, with her intensity and solipsism setting its tone. Mara is visited by angels, but believes she has lost her faith. Irritatingly, she also persists in considering herself plain — eyes too big, hair too luxuriant and so on — when it is clear from the response of every male she meets that she is devastatingly attractive. This ensures that her progress from despair to a kind of hope is not a solitary one.

She is drawn into a closed community of students and trainee vicars who attend prayer meetings and seductive meetings and probe their own relationships and motives. It is an anachronistic fictional world: these students do not panic about overdrafts, follow the storyline of *Brookside* or *East-Enders* nor juggle essays with part-time jobs.

Angels and Men does not seem to have decided quite what kind of novel it wants to be. More edge and detachment in the writing might have let a sharper and funnier book emerge. But it has strengths and among them is its passionate dramatisation of the differences between a church and a cult.

Fox clearly knows this territory well and she writes with verve about the way Christianity is always at the mercy of its interpreters.

HELEN DUNMORE

Wheelchair with attitude

DECLARATIONS OF INDEPENDENCE
By John Hockenberry
Viking, £16

WHEN an autobiography is sold as "achingly honest", it usually means embarrassing. Nor does the heart lift at the prospect of yet another set of journalist's war memoirs. John Hockenberry's *Declarations of Independence* is by a wheelchair-bound Middle East reporter, and I admit that I expected little joy of it.

Ten pages in, I apologised aloud to the author. An hour later I gave up using markers because I was tabbing every page. It is a marvellous book: tough, acute, personal, barlingly funny and often so moving that you have to lay it down. It has a curious quality I can only describe as in-your-face grace.

Hockenberry was paralysed from the chest down at 19. He has since been a music student, a reporter, a finalist for the "journalist in space" programme ("In a wheelchair environment, who needs legs?") and an importunate lover capable of lunacies such as semi-accidentally concealing himself and his folded wheelchair all night under his girlfriend's bed. He tells it all: the problems of hygienic self-catheterisation in a war zone, the rudeness of Stephen Hawking, the shame an American citizen felt among the

How a paraplegic journalist made a mission for himself



Hockenberry: in-your-face grace

refugee Kurds after the Gulf "victory", and the way paraplegics compete and despise one another like any other gang of young men.

He loathes Oprah victims and "teletion craps", jeers at role models, refuses pity with venom and confides that it is seen as a "pansy-assed" thing for a paraplegic to

have armrests. Real men toss armless chairs onto side-hooks on filthy pickup trucks and practice hot-dogging onto a curb alone, under cover of the night, in deserted shopping malls.

It is often active young men who end up in wheelchairs and this book solves the conundrum of what happens to their arrogant machismo: nothing. Yet he sees his own absurdities clearly and quotes with glee his father's line, "Son, I think you use that wheelchair as a crutch".

He spent months perfecting a bite-down device to enable him to use the pedals on a piano, then blithely gave it up in favour of the harpsichord so he could concentrate on the music. After a humiliating moment as a tyro reporter when an interviewee absentmindedly handed him a dollar, he admits that it was partly his fault for rolling around with big, mad, red socks on, because wearing shoes was a self-out to the walking lobby.

In the course of the book, he grows up. The suffering of Kurds and Somalis puts his own into perspective: in the mud, fallen from his donkey in the mountains, he even learns to accept help. "In Kurdistan I discovered that the world is a much larger place than can be filled by the mission of one man and his wheelchair." But what a man, and what a mission.

LIBBY PURVES

Where holiness shines

In a village in Piedmont, Mammon is haunted by a young girl's visions

IT SEEMS an unjust distribution of talent that Cristina Odone, who has already demonstrated her journalistic ability as editor of the *Catholic Herald*, should now show that she can write a subtle and enjoyable novel. When I first read *The Shrine* in manuscript, I started it with the anxiety one inevitably feels when asked to judge the work of a friend, but was soon captivated by her portrayal of life in the Piedmont village of San Lorenzo.

Odone's heroine, Alma Ferrari, a painter living in Turin, returns on the death of her father to her family home in the village. It is the grandest house in San Lorenzo, surrounded by its own estate, but it turns out that her swash-buckling father has left nothing but debts. Together with

THE SHRINE
By Cristina Odono
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £15.99

her brother, Francesco, Alma must try to salvage an inheritance that embodies everything they hold dear.

Meanwhile, the local inhabitants hatch a plot to exploit the visions of the Virgin Mary that have come to Santarella, a pious girl in the village, by making San Lorenzo into a shrine. Santarella's mother is the mistress of the mayor; Don Luigi is the parish priest. Odono sketches the characters of half-a-dozen villagers with great skill and restraint; they might so easily have degenerated into "Don Camillo" stereotypes.

The link between the small world of San Lorenzo and the wider and more sophisticated



Odone: talent to spare

life known to the Ferratis in London and Turin is the local lawyer, Miso Brusoni, Alma's suitor and Francesco's childhood friend. The link proves weak. Alma is a child of her time. Men are a threat to her autonomy and independence. "When he kissed her, she felt as if she had abandoned all claim to herself."

So too is the security represented by San Lorenzo. She rejects the idea of a life like Miso's as a big fish in a small bowl and chooses instead the challenge of life in Turin. But always haunting the urbane and sophisticated Ferratis is the ethereal visionary, Santarella, an image of innocence and holiness in a confused and compromised world.

PIERS PAUL READ

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22. ENDEMNER CUE NR
23. DIAMONDS ARE A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND

The winner of the Christmas Jumbo Crossword, published on December 23, is Mrs P. Judges of Osbaldwick, Yorkshire. She will receive £100 and a Methuselah of Moët and Chandon champagne.

The five runners-up, who will each receive £100, are: Mr D.J. Evans of Morriston, Swansea; Mrs C.A. Bell of Guildford, Surrey; Miss E.H. O'Toole of London; C.R. Thompson of Edinburgh and Mr N. Harris of London.

NEW ON CD: Sibelius in symphony and song; why McFerrin should worry; good reasons not to vote Tori

ORCHESTRAL

Barry Millington

SIBELIUS
Symphonies 2 & 6
Pittsburgh Symphony
Orchestra/Maazel
Sony SK 53 268**

LORIN MAZEL's cycle of the Sibelius symphonies with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, recorded in the 1960s, has long been one of the pillars of the catalogue. In 1992 Decca reissued it on three bargain-price CDs, but by then Maazel had already embarked on another Sibelius cycle for Sony, this time with the Pittsburgh Symphony, of which he is music director. Symphonies 1, 4, 5 and 7 of this second cycle have already disappeared from the catalogue (temporarily, one hopes), yet here is Sony putting out a further disc, of the Second and Sixth, recorded at the same time as the



Maazel: hint of melancholy

others at the beginning of the 1990s.

Over the course of three decades, Maazel's understanding of Sibelius has deepened by contrast with his earlier set. This is particularly evident in the Second, which was harder driven with the VPO, the opening movement pushed on especially precipitously. Now Maazel gives more attention to the "poco" of the "Poco Allegro" at the initial gathering of speed in the first movement, and his approach generally is to allow tensions to accumulate and unwind under their own momentum.

This is the key to great Sibelius conducting and nobody understands that better than Colin Davis, who also has a new cycle under way. Davis's recording of the Second and Sixth will prove difficult to beat. His tempos for the former are always judicious (Maazel begins sluggishly), there is more bite to his running quavers in the Scherzo third movement and a more satisfying climax in the finale.

Things improve for Maazel in the Sixth: the heartwarming

string ensemble of the opening has just the right hint of melancholy, the flickering half-lights of the second movement are nicely caught and the tragic build-up in the final stages skilfully engineered.

OPERA

John Higgins

FERNANDO DE LA MORA
The Artistry of
Fernando de la Mora
Welsh National Opera
Orchestra/Mackerras
Telarc CD-80411***

THE MEXICAN tenor, Fernando de la Mora, is still little known in Britain. He stepped in for Alfredo Kraus during the run of *L'elisir d'amore* at Covent Garden three years ago but has not been back. Some reckon he is the man among the 30-year-olds most likely to give Roberto Alagna a run for his money.

His first recital disc for Telarc is almost a gauntlet thrown down at Alagna's feet. De la Mora tackles some of the French opera roles Alagna has been singing or will be singing before long: Gounod's *Romeo*, Bizet's *Jose* and, perhaps most saucily of all, Massenet's *Werther*. Identical arias can be found on Alagna's own EMI recital disc of a few months back.

The Mexican cannot command the liquid, almost caressing sound that makes Alagna so impressive in 19th-century French opera. Otherwise he carries a formidable range of tenor armoury. High Cs, loud and soft, cause him no problem. Nor do the even loftier pinnacles of Tosti's *Ahi mes amis* from Donizetti's *La Fille du régiment*. The real quality of de la Mora's voice, though, shows in the warm, enveloping flow he gives to familiar arias by Puccini, Cilea and Giordano. The Italian *verismo* repertoire sounds tailor-made for him on the strength of this recital. Note the name and try the disc.

Charles Mackerras and the Welsh National Opera Orchestra provide sturdy support. The accompanying booklet lists two recording dates and venues, one in Swansea and the other in Cincinnati, but Telarc says this is a printing error.

AMANDA ROOCROFT
Mozart and his
Contemporaries
Academy of
St Martin-in-the-Fields/
Marriner
EMI CDC 5 55396 2**

HERE is Roocroft in high dramatic mood. Mozart is represented by two concert arias and three heroines: Ilia, Donna Elvira and Fiordiligi.

NEW ON VIDEO: Bold knights in Camelot, warm nights with Monica Vitti, and sleepless nights with baby

FIRST KNIGHT

Columbia TriStar, 12, 1995

YOU CAN put Richard Gere in a suit of armour and give him Guinevere to woo, but if you do nothing to tame his cocky grin or American accent, he is not going to be a convincing Lancelot. Julia Ormond makes a reasonable Guinevere, a principled lady on the verge of marriage to the noble King Arthur, a part Sean Connery takes with rather too much ease. The battle scenes look impressive, but much good work is undone by William Nicholson's plodding script. In a word, a mess. Available to rent.

JACK & SARAH

PolyGram, 15, 1995

SARAH is a gurgling baby. Jack (Richard E. Grant) is the father, struggling with nappies after his wife dies in labour. And don't forget Amy (Samantha Mathis), the good-hearted American who comes to be Sarah's nanny and Jack's new love. Then there are the in-laws, hovering with well-meant advice, and Ian McKellen, a vagrant turned manservant who flits through the script like a goblin. Tim Sullivan's film is good for an easy laugh and a warm glow, but it lacks the sharpness of the best British comedies, past or present. A rental release.

EAST LA

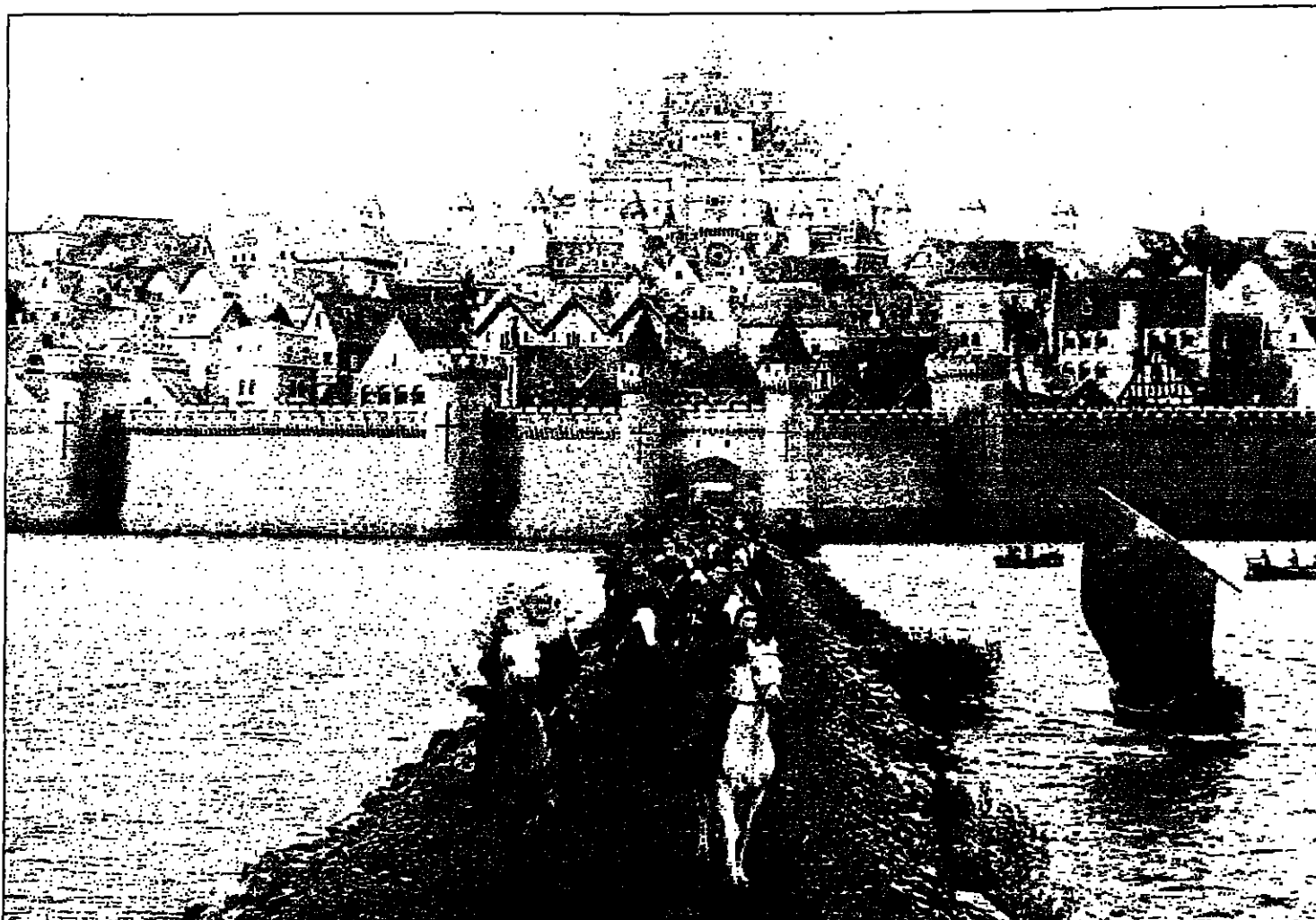
Entertainment, 15, 1995

RELEASED in cinemas as *My Family*, Gregory Nava's film gets a new, rougher-sounding title. But it remains the same sweet-toothed family saga, following the progress of Mexican immigrants over three decades. They get born, get married, get shot and go to jail. The dusky colours are pleasing, and some performances briefly touch the heart, but the film is too long and too ready to fall into melodrama. With Jimmy Smits, Essi Morales and Edward James Olmos. To rent.

LECLISSE

Art House, PG, 1992

THE SPATE of Antonioni video releases continues with the final film



King and country: Sean Connery as King Arthur leads the procession of knights from Camelot in the lavish but messy *First Knight*

in his trilogy exploring alienation in modern society. As before, Monica Vitti is his muse, a young Roman woman who begins a passionate affair with a cocky stockbroker (Alain Delon) after ending another with a cold intellectual (Francisco Rabal). Happiness proves elusive; so does the plot, which disappears under the weight of interior decorations, building sites and all the other images which the director craves so

beautifully. A film for which some patience is needed.

INNOCENT LIES

PolyGram, 15, 1995

DIRECTOR Patrick Dewolf, script partner of *Hairdresser's Husband* creator Patrice Leconte, cloaks a tale of obsession and murder in fancy angles, period clothes (the time is 1938) and grey coastal scenery. But the film, available to rent, is little

more than a frigid stylistic exercise, and the cast — Stephen Dorff, Gabrielle Anwar, Joanna Lumley, Adrian Dunbar — can do little to warm it up.

POSTCARDS FROM AMERICA

Dangerous to Know, 18, 1994

STEVE McLEAN, groomed in British pop promos and television, piles on the glossy style for this eye-

grabbing fantasia about a gay American outsider, inspired by the life and writings of the artist and Aids activist David Wojnarowicz. McLean skates over Wojnarowicz's anger at the world and his fate, but his mobile camera certainly excels at catching beautiful surfaces, from desert rocks and 1950s furniture to golden male bodies.

GEOFF BROWN



Roocroft: to opulent effect

The new-found weight in Roocroft's soprano is shown off to opulent effect and she puts passion into everything, even when it leads to a certain hardness in the voice. The "Contemporaries", Ci-marra and Haydn, are even more florid. The lengthy outburst *Deh, parlami* from *Il sacrificio d'Abraham*, written in the same year as *Figaro*,

will surprise those who think of Ci-marra only as the jolly composer of *Matrimonio segreto*. He could trade in lofty sentiments with the best of them. So too could Haydn as he runs through any number of emotions in the *Scena di Berenice*. Roocroft has the technical skill to make the most of these show-off pieces.

But the recital is monotonously heavy-weight and could have done with an item or two to expose the sparkly, flirtatious side Roocroft so memorably displayed in her first Glyndebourne *Cost*. The accompaniment from Neville Marriner and the Academy of St Martin's is reverential.

VOCAL

Hilary Finch

SIBELIUS

Songs
Mattiila/Ranta
Ondine ODE 856-2***

THE FINNISH soprano Karita Mattiila, in clear, pure, yet ever more lustrous voice, offers 24 of Sibelius's hundred or more still neglected songs in this irresistible recital with pianist Ilmo Ranta. Here is many a dream of a summer night, and of the "blue hour" of the Nordic twilight in *Fagellek* (*Play of the Birds*) and the strange, sparsely accompanied lines of the swan's song in *Jubal*.

Mattiila recreates powerfully the sensuous urgency of Sibelius's settings of his beloved poet J. L. Runeberg. Her performances of *The First Kiss*, *The Trust* and *The North* are nicely complemented by Sibelius's more subtle, lilting settings of the Finnish language: songs like *Lastu lainehilla* (*Driftwood*) and *Kaivuri* (*The Echo Nymph*) are just two of the rare delights of this disc.

KIRSTEN FLAGSTAD

Live Performances
1935-48, 1948-57

Sinox PSC 1822, 1823**

CONNOISSEURS of the Nordic voice will be happy to know that the second and third volumes of Sinox's survey of the live performances of the great Norwegian soprano Kirsten Flagstad are now available. Volume 3 contains



Flagstad: broad radiance

Wesendonck-Lieder she recorded in 1952 with the Royal Philharmonic and Sir Thomas Beecham. These are rhythmically robust, well-defined performances in pretty rough recordings.

Even poorer recording quality mars an otherwise quite wonderful *Four Last Songs*, performed at the request of Richard Strauss himself, with Wilhelm Furtwängler conducting the Philharmonic in an exultant, vibrant Albert Hall debut in May 1950.

JAZZ

Clive Davis

BOBBY MCFERRIN

Blue Zoom
Blue Note CDP8-31672*

A BRAVE man, Bobby McFerrin. Using just his imagination and various parts of his anatomy, he overturned our ideas of what constitutes a jazz singer, veered off into unexpected pop stardom with *Don't Worry, Be Happy*, only to return in a new incarnation as a bona fide orchestral conductor. An opera, we are promised, is on the way.

Released just a few months after *Paper Music* — his controversial excursion into the popular classics — *Bang! Zoom* bears all the signs of a restlessly inquisitive musician who is beginning to spread himself thin.

The ethereal voice continues to dazzle and defy gravity. The problem lies in the inconsequential melodies and 1970s pastiches. Nobody who grew up listening to Earth Wind & Fire or Stevie Wonder will be left unmoved by McFerrin's sense of fun, while the occasional percolating noise of bass clarinet in the background evokes memories of the fusion-and-flares cocktails that Herbie Hancock served up 20-odd years ago. The truth remains that both the instrumentals and the songs, with their carelessly assembled lyrics, would sit far more comfortably in the soundtrack of some young, upwardly-mobile sitcom.

JOHN SCOTFIELD

Groove Elation
Blue Note CDP8-32801***

JOHN SCOTFIELD's down-home funk is the real thing, hot and sweaty when necessary, yet executed with intelligence and a quiet authority. This, you sense, is the music that his old boss Miles Davis should have been making in those final years when he was vainly chasing after Michael Jackson's sequenced coat-tails.

Larry Goldings's pugnacious electric organ once again acts as sheet anchor for the guitarist's quartet. The principal advance on last year's first-rate release, *Hand Jive*, lies in the understated writing for Steve Turre's trombone and the tuba and baritone saxophone of Howard Johnson. Scofield could easily have thrown together a string of splashy brass lines; the muted colours he sketches form an even more potent contrast to his own, ever more forceful playing.

Idris Muhammad's sly shuffle on the drums gives the group all the momentum of a Crescent City marching band.

POP ALBUM

David Sinclair

TORI AMOS

Boys For Pele
eastwest 7507-82862*

A BLEAK, craggy monument to the emotional turbulence in Tori Amos's life, *Boys for Pele* redefines the concept of the "difficult" third album.

Conceived during the break-up of her eight-year relationship (romantic and professional) with producer Eric Rosse, it was mostly written during the singer's last tour. "I've dragged my boyfriend's balls halfway across Europe," she declared on a recent British television chat show, an experience which sounds about as much fun for him as listening to this album is likely to prove for the rest of us.

Less than a third of the 18 tracks accommodate a full

rhythm section, and the austere arrangements are dominated by Amos's alternately thunderous and tinkling piano parts and heavily mannered singing. A courtly harpsichord is featured on several songs, along with occasional touches of strings, harmonium, bagpipes, church bells and a couple of cameo performances by the Black Dyke Mills (brass) Band. But despite these odd dashes of instrumental colour, the album's pulse remains stiff and ungainly, its tone charmless and cheerless throughout.

While rarely making much sense, Amos's lyrics sometimes resonate with dark sexual connotations, as on *Blood Roses* and *Professional Widow* (a song apparently about Courtney Love). But more



Amos: primal warbling

often the words simply spill out like seeds scattered in the wind, their meaning buried among the haphazard nonsense-phrases which result ("I need some voodoo on these prunes"; "Congratulate you said you had a double tongue balancing cake and bread").

Conventional verse-chorus structures and tunes are large-

ly abandoned in favour of convoluted, open-ended pieces, enabling Amos to give full rein to her extended bouts of primal warbling. It might work as therapy or revenge, but why take it out on us?

POP SINGLE

David Sinclair

BRANDY

Sittin' Up In My Room
Arista 74321 344012**

THE NEW Whitney Houston film, *Waiting to Exhale*, finally goes on general release in Britain next week, and to make sure we do not forget about it, a string of singles from the equally successful soundtrack have been slated for the coming weeks. Look out for songs by Mary J. Blige and Houston with CeCe Winans next month, but first it is the turn of the 16-year-old soul singer and actress Brand Norwood, or Brandy.

Sittin' Up In My Room is a quietly smouldering slice of swingbeat-funk performed with a firm, sensual touch. A bundle of unrequited passion, Brandy is sitting in her room thinking about the object of her desire. "I pray that you'll invest in my happiness/All it takes is just one simple call from you," she sings in a deep, velvety voice that would have most men fumbling for their key-pads there and then.

Written by Kenny "Babyface" Edmonds, as is most of the soundtrack, it lacks any real passion, but has his familiar stamp of quality and, indeed, the mark of another big hit about it.

★ Worth hearing
★★ Worth considering
★★★ Worth buying

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SPECIAL EVENTS



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"Turner Watercolours" at the National Gallery of Scotland

Visit this annual display of 38 magnificent Turner watercolours, bequeathed to the gallery in 1900 by the Victorian art collector Henry Vaughan, who stipulated that they should only be shown in January, when daylight is at its weakest. This popular exhibition has been expanded this year to include recent Turner acquisitions and the artist's illustrations to the poems of Thomas Campbell.

Admission free

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The Mound, Edinburgh Tel 0131 556 8921

Exhibition runs until January 31

Mon-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2pm-5pm

LONDON, WC2

"The Lure of the Linelight" - James Abbe, Photographer of Cinema and Stage" at the National Portrait Gallery

James Abbe was one of the leading American photographers of the 1920s and is best known for his portraits of stars of the cinema and stage including Rudolph Valentino, Lillian Gish and Louise Brooks. This is the first major retrospective of Abbe's work.

Admission free

Passport holders are entitled to a 10% off NPG shop purchases (not books)

St Martin's Place Tel 0171 304 0055

Exhibition runs until March 24

Mon-Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 12pm-6pm

CAMBRIDGE

"Primavera: Pioneering Craft and Design 1945-1995" at the Fitzwilliam Museum

The Primavera craft shop opened in London in 1946 and for 30 years provided a unique forum for many talented craftspeople and designers. Celebrating the wide ranging activities of Primavera and its dedicated founder Henry

Rothschild, this exhibition provides a rare opportunity to view a cross-section of the best in post-war craft and design.

Admission free

Passport holders are entitled to a 5% reduction on shop purchases and a free poster/print

Trumpington Street, Cambridge

Tel 01223 332900

Exhibition runs from January 23 until June 2

Tue-Sat 10am-5pm, Sun 2.15pm-5pm

CHEPSTOW

"The Wheel" at Chepstow Museum

This exhibition looks at the history and development of the wheel - one of the world's most important inventions. It still plays a significant part in technology as well as in transport, from watchmaker to waterwheel, up to turbine. "Hands On" participatory exhibits are a feature of this exhibition.

Admission £1 adults, 50p students and senior citizens, children free

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Guy House, Bridge Street Tel 01291 625981

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How to keep up with the Howards

Historic reproductions from some of Britain's best houses

Once, if you wanted to own something that looked as if it came from a stately home, you either had to inherit it or bid auction when one of the great collections was scattered by tragedy or taxation. A mail-order catalogue has changed all that.

The catalogue, Ancestral Collections, devised by Lady Victoria leatham and her business partner Elizabeth Nicholl, offers reproductions of antique furniture and objects from five of Britain's best known historic houses. In most cases, the items have been recreated using the original techniques.

Lady Victoria is curator of Burghley House, Lincolnshire, one of the houses in the catalogue, and a general appraiser for Sotheby's and BBC's *Antiques Roadshow*, and has a passion for Japanese ceramics and delftware. She had been mulling over the idea for Ancestral Collections for some time before teaming up with Ms Nicholl and creating the first catalogue, released late last year.

The catalogue is stuffed with information about the houses, and a small percentage of the price of each purchase goes towards their upkeep. Each year's catalogue will be different. "This is a collecting opportunity as much as a purchasing one," Lady Victoria says.

Highlanders, Britain's only private army — relic of the clan system when each chief raised an army at the king's call — and maintained by the 10th Duke of Atholl. Representing the castle in the Ancestral Collections catalogue is a hand-cut glass beaker (£144), copied from a pair in the castle's white drawing room. It is large enough to use as an ice bucket and is decorated with 22-carat gold chinoiserie.

Lady Victoria's domain, Burghley House, has a park landscaped by Capability Brown. The house was built in the late 16th century by one of the great Elizabethans, William Cecil, a Lord Mayor of London and High Treasurer to Elizabeth I. The catalogue offers a copy of a Delft charger (£380) from an original in Burghley House's huge collection. Deborah Sears, an Oxford artist, takes two days to hand-paint each plate with the fine blue scene of Burghley House as it appeared in 1745. "Deborah is one of the few people doing real Delft any more," Lady Victoria says.

Castle Howard, North Yorkshire, built in the early 18th century, is still the home of the Howard family. It was the setting for the television series *Brideshead Revisited* and *The Buccaneers* and is represented in the catalogue by a solid hardwood, hand-carved Georgian stool (£390), the most expensive item on offer, and a replica of one of a set of eight from the 1790s. Also representative of the castle is a resin copy of a crested artillery shell case-carrier from the Boer War, adapted for use as a lavatory brush holder (£67, brush included), which is, Lady Victoria says, "going like a bomb".

The land at Elton Hall, Peterborough, has been in the Proby family since 1595, and the house since 1660. Its extensive private library includes Henry VIII's prayer book, inscribed by the king and two of his wives.

The catalogue's offering is an elaborate silver and gold-leaf salt container and spoon in the shape of a Paris street vendor holding a basket (£188), copied from a piece created for Elton Hall in the 19th century.



Left: Burghley Charger (15½ in diameter, £380), after a tin-glazed delftware dish of 1745 at Burghley House. By Deborah Sears



Above: reproduction of an ornate, Napoleonic era candlestick, with a classical maiden in bronzed resin standing on a marbled plinth, from Castle Howard (£105 each, £199 per pair)

Left: these resin reproductions of Boer War artillery shell-case carriers in Castle Howard, serve as lavatory brush holders (£67 each, including brush)



This "Georgian" footstool, with scooped seat, measuring 2½ ft by 14 in, is a replica of one of a set of eight at Castle Howard in Yorkshire. Price £390

One of the few 20th century pieces is a hand-worked, fringed tapestry cushion (£85) from a William Morris design of irises, primroses and strawberries.

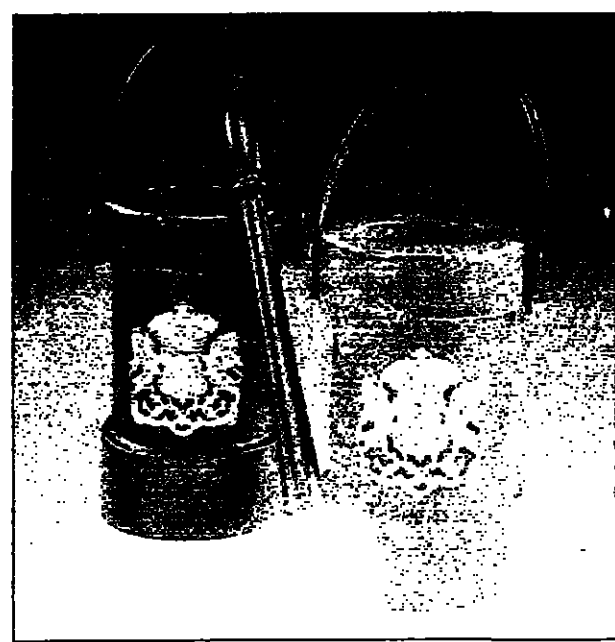
Although Knebworth house, Hertfordshire, was built in 1490 to a simple design, its most striking feature is the 19th-century addition of turrets, domes, gargoyles and a Gothic interior, the inspiration of the Victorian novelist Edward Bulwer Lytton.

The house is represented in the catalogue by a pair of plaster bookends (£65) depicting chubby little girls. The originals were chosen for Knebworth's nursery by Sir Edward Lyttons at the turn of the century.

"In choosing the five houses, I shamelessly went to people I knew well," Lady Victoria says. But selecting the 30 pieces for the catalogue was not easy. "Of course, certain objects looked right in the grand houses, but unsuitable for a 12ft x 15ft sitting room."

Finding the right people to recreate the objects was more difficult still. "We made about 600 telephone calls," Lady Victoria says. "Often people would say, 'No, we can't do that, but I know someone who can', and we'd find another supplier. Lots of our suppliers are really one-man bands."

Roger Hordchow, known in America for his stylish, and pricey, gift and clothing catalogues, advised on the collection. "He is sort of a guru as far as I'm concerned," Lady Victoria says. "He gave us three pieces of very good



advice. One, start small. Two, do it all yourself or you will never learn how the business runs. Three, don't go for the big, glamorous, easy mailing lists — go for people who have earned their own money."

The two partners hope to start a retail outlet when the capital is available and, in the future, Ancestral Collections may offer historic tours. Preparation is under way for the next catalogue selection.

NANCY PATTON WOOD

For a free copy of the Ancestral Collections catalogue, write to Ancestral Collections, The Old Corn Store, Burghley Courtyard, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 3JY (01780 482522, or fax 01780 65305).



Silver and gilt model of a Paris street vendor (£185) featured at Elton Hall. Made by the Barnard workshops, it is about 6in high by 3in in diameter



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Times readers have a unique opportunity to name a new rose. If your suggestion is chosen, you will be given an exclusive invitation to be a guest at the preview day of the Chelsea Flower Show in May, 1997.

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The winner of our name the rose competition and a guest will stay in London overnight before the Chelsea Flower Show next year, when the new rose will be launched. In addition, there are 20 runners-up prizes of the RNIB rose bush.

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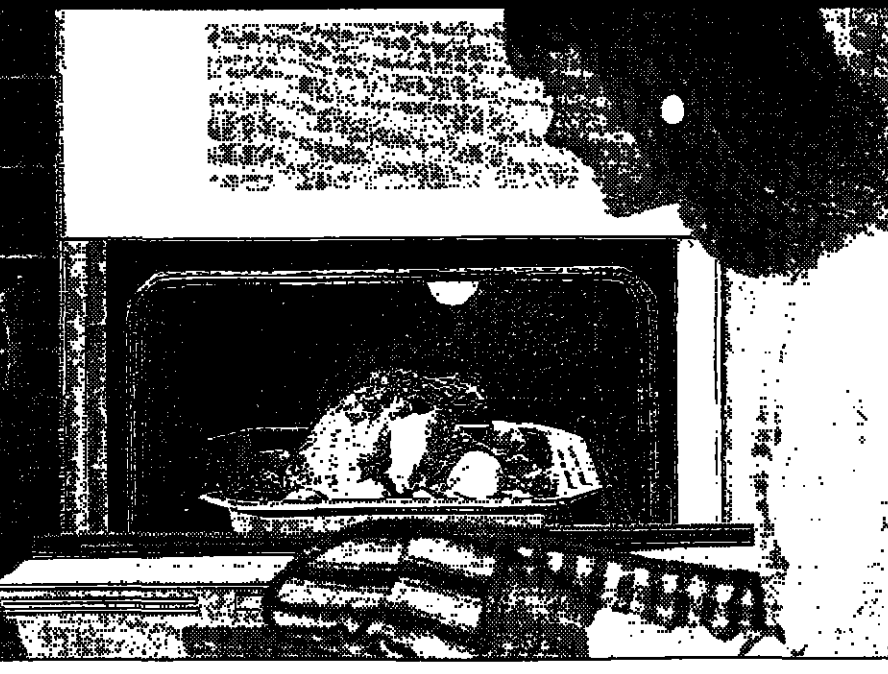
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Alex Clark, The Times/RNIB Rose Competition, 224 Great Portland Street, London W1N 6AA.

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By Michael Simpson

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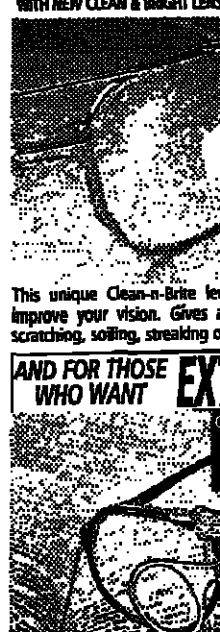
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Photograph of The Grayswood (5 bedroom home)

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PROPERTY

19

Families rescue heartbreak hotels

Rachel Kelly reports on a new life for redundant country house hotels

When Lucy and Jeremy Thompson and their two children moved into Milton Manor, in the village of Milton Abbas, Dorset, nearly three years ago, they had a kitchen for each member of the family.

They also found 1,000 plastic shower caps, an old AA sign with two stars, 40 royal-wedding flags, 20 coffee jugs and hundreds of "Do not enter" signs. The house had previously been a hotel.

The Thompsons bought it from the receivers for £270,000. Four years earlier it had been advertised for £650,000, but there were no takers. In the interim, it had been repeatedly broken into and vandalised.

Mrs Thompson says: "We were looking for a four or five-bedroom house but couldn't find anything we liked. Then my husband saw this horrendous pile. What family of four wants a 17-bedroom house? But he persuaded me to look at it, and I just sat in the car and laughed."

The house was grey and depressing. Mrs Thompson says. "It had been empty for years after the hotel went bankrupt, and was covered in mould, with water pouring in through the roof. The six-acre garden was overgrown. The bank which had repossessed

the property had boarded up the broken doors and windows."

For six weeks, the family lived in the "dinky and smelly coach house".

"Every morning I woke up and hoped it was all just a bad dream," Mrs Thompson says. "Then I realised, 'Oh, my God, it's real.'"

Gradually, the house has been refurbished. The £50,000 cost includes re-roofing, rewiring and replumbing. Three years later, the family have a well-proportioned house with ten bedrooms.

The space has been gobbled up: a wood store here, a study there, and one room kept free for Mrs Thompson's photography. The spare kitchens have become a garage.

Part of the house has been let. The Thompsons had not planned to rent out any part of the house until it was refurbished, but a passing couple said they would take some rooms as they were. They now occupy a flat with a sitting room, kitchen, bathroom and two double bedrooms.

The only reminder of the house's previous existence is that former guests still turn up for tea.

This is a success story. The family bought the house cheaply because they sought a home at the time of a depressed hotels market. Local



Rachel Hayward's new home is a former ten-bedroom hotel near Barnstaple, Devon

agents say that a similar property in the residential market could have cost double (excluding conversion costs). Can other people repeat this success? Does it still make sense to buy and convert a former country house hotel? The main problem is finding

such a property. When the Thompsons bought, country house hotels were one of the worst victims of the recession, but agents Knight Frank reports that 1995 showed signs of recovery. "Companies such as Stakis, Arcadian, Principal and Paramount Hotels have

spent about £566 million on hotel acquisitions in the past 12 months," says Alistair Bell, Knight Frank's partner in hotels.

The recovery in the market means that only those country house hotels which failed utterly are available for conversion to country houses. "In the main, these will be hotels which do not have excellent road communications in a popular area close to big towns," says Derek Gam-

mage, also of Knight Frank. These characteristics could be exactly the ones which appeal to the private buyer. In a housing market short of attractive, correctly priced country properties, converting a hotel could be an answer — if planning permission is granted and conversion expenses add up.

Where then, are these hidden potential gems? Christie & Co is the largest

dealer in hotels, while estate agents Knight Frank, Savills and Brodie's in Edinburgh also sell hotels.

Patrick Ryan, Christie's managing director, has selected several properties that might be suitable for conversion.

One is only for the brave. Chilton Park is outside Lenham, near Maidstone, Kent. The fine, mainly 17th-century, Grade I listed building was converted into a hotel ten years ago. One drawback is its £2 million price tag. Others are the 38 bedrooms, all with en suite bathrooms, the five dining rooms, a drawing room, and billiard room.

More manageable, perhaps, is Priory Court Hotel, near Pevensey, East Sussex. The 17th-century building has nine bedrooms and seven bathrooms, is in two acres and for sale at £495,000.

Another possibility is Donavon House Hotel, in six acres by Pithorchy in Perthshire. It has seven bedrooms and five bathrooms and is for sale for £310,000.

Of course, the really adventurous could consider running the hotel themselves, or let out rooms. The Hayward family used to stay in the ten-bedroom, eight-bathroom Cowsworthy House Hotel in six acres near Barnstaple, Devon. Several years later, they saw it had gone out of business and was for sale.

They bought it for £190,000, and spent about £10,000 on the conversion, with the idea of using it as a holiday home.

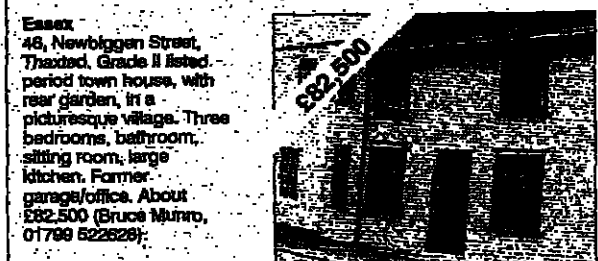
They have kept part of the house for themselves, but now let the rest out to families as holiday rentals, through Helpful Holidays. The rates vary from £621 a weekend for 15 people in low season to £1,145 a weekend in high season. A cottage in the grounds can be rented separately or as part of the package.

Christie & Co (0171-486 4221), Knight Frank (0171-629 8771), Bookers at Cowsworthy House Hotel can be made through Helpful Holidays (01647 43593).

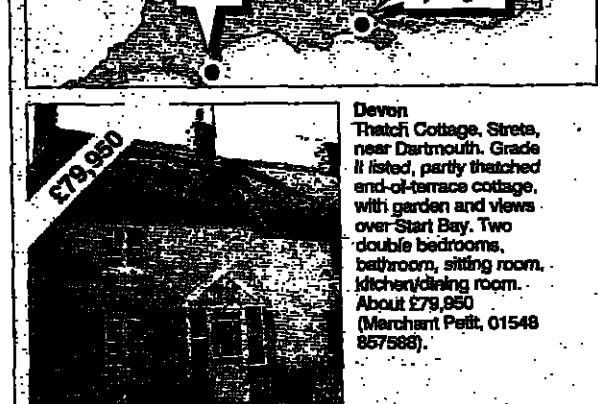
FOR SALE



Hampshire Rambler Cottage, Fox Pond Lane, Lymington. Thatched cottage in well-stocked garden. Bedroom, shower room, sitting/dining room (with inglenook, fireplace) and kitchen. Workshop and summerhouse. About £70,000 (GA Town and Country, 01590 875025).

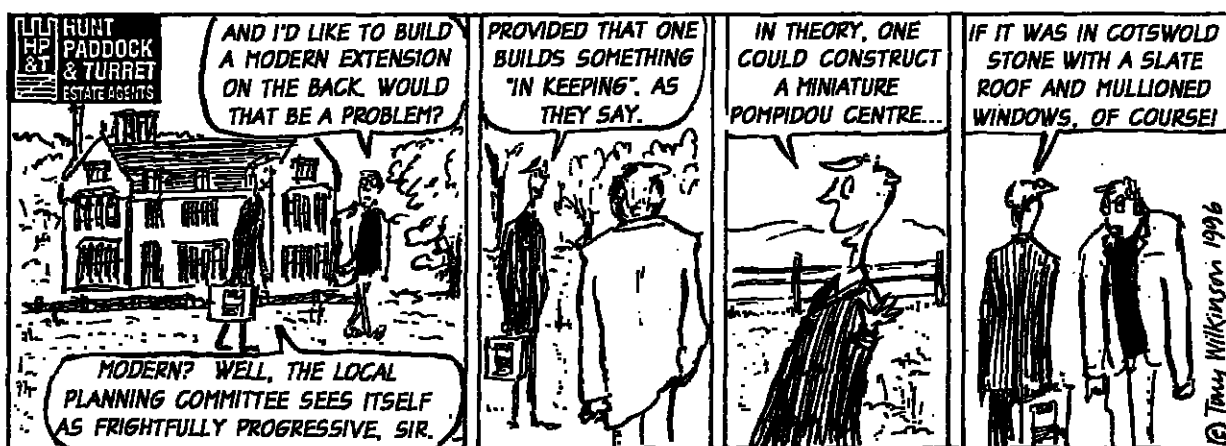


Essex Thatched Cottage, 48, Newbiggin Street, Thatched, Grade II listed, period town house, with rear garden, in a picturesque village. Three bedrooms, bathroom, sitting room, large kitchen. Former garage/office. About £82,500 (Bruce Milne, 01799 822828).



Devon Thatched Cottage, Strete, near Dartmouth. Grade II listed, partly thatched end-of-terrace cottage, with garden and views over Strete Bay. Two double bedrooms, bathroom, sitting room, kitchen/dining room. About £78,850 (Merchant Pells, 01548 857988).

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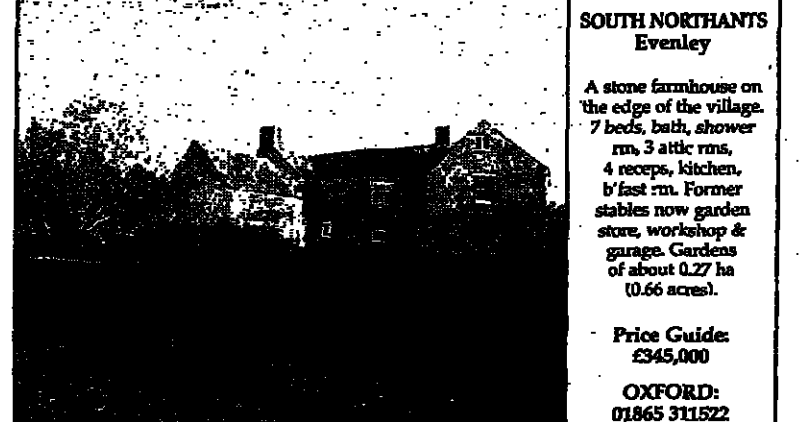
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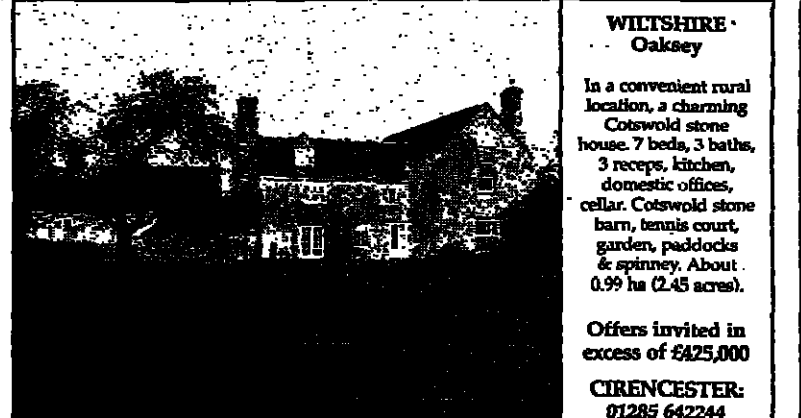
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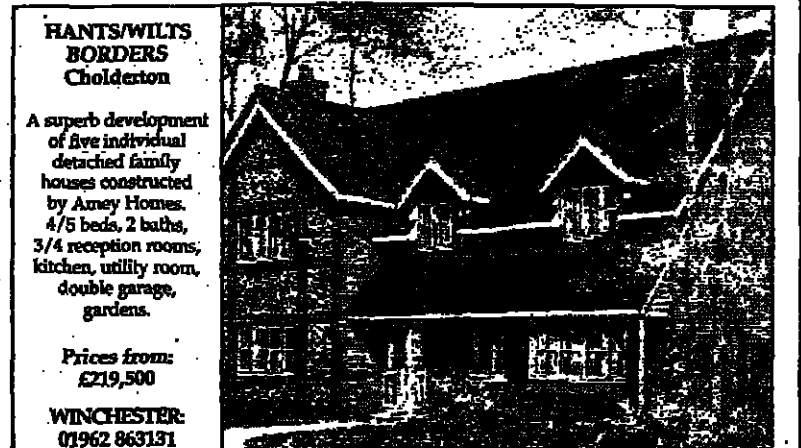
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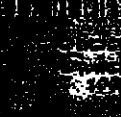
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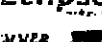
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GAMES

27

by Raymond Keene

LUKE McSHANE'S achievement in becoming, at 11, the youngest British player ever to defeat a grandmaster in a formal tournament has amazed chess devotees around the country. Indeed, his record in defeating grandmaster Colin McNaughton eight days before his 12th birthday will stand with the best and certainly goes into the chess history books.

Each year the nation's chess fans travel to Hastings for the traditional New Year Congress, founded in 1895 and thus celebrating its centenary over the turn of the year. As the world's longest running chess tournament, Hastings has witnessed exploits on the 64 squares by most of the greats, including Lasker, Capablanca, Alekhine and the Soviet champions, Botvinnik and Karpov.

Luke was recognised as an outstanding talent at the age of five, when he frequented the London Chess Centre in Clapham, where he lives. His early teacher was the centre's director, Julian Simpole, followed by the grandmaster Daniel King. In 1992 he won the world championship for Under-10s at Duisberg in Germany.

Luke's achievement betters those of Britain's grandmasters such as Nigel Short and Michael Adams, both of whom had to wait until their teens before winning their first grandmaster scalp.

A boost to Luke's career, unavailable to British champions and prodigies of the past, has been ongoing support from a computer company, Psion, which ensures that he can take up tournament opportunities, and continue his regular tuition from grandmasters such as King and Jon Speelman.

Nigel Short first beat a grandmaster at the age of 14, when he crushed Tony Miles in the 1979 British Championship. Michael Adams beat James Blackett in 1985, when he was just 13. Luke's achievement has brought him remarkably close to the world record itself. In October 1922, just before his 11th birthday, Sammy Reshevsky defeated grandmaster David Janowsky in New York. As far as I can see, this record still stands.

Here then is Luke's win:
White: McShane; Black: McNaughton
Hastings Challengers 1995
Pine Defence

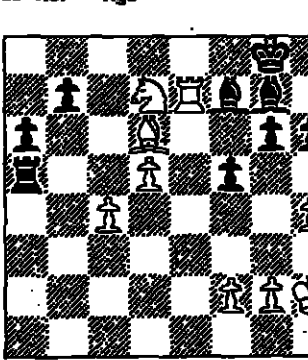
1 e4 g6 2 d4 d5
3 Nc3 c6 4 Bg5 Nf6
5 Qd2 Nd7 6 Bx7 Bx7
7 Bx7 Bx7 8 Bx7 Bx7
9 Bx7 Bx7 10 Bx7 Bx7

If 10 Nxe4, d5 regains the piece.

10 ... Rd7 11 Nxe4 Nf6
12 Ng5 Rf8 13 O-O h6
14 Nxf6+ Kxf6 15 Ne4 c5
16 Nc3 Kf7 17 d5 c6
18 Nb5 Qd8 19 Bf4 Rf6
20 h4 a6 21 Na3 Rf8
22 a5 Bx7 23 Rf1 Bf6
24 Ne4 Bx7 25 Rf2 Rf7
26 Rf3 Bf6 27 Nf5 Bx7
28 c4 Qf6

The game has been characterised by slow manoeuvre, but White's control of the e-file and greater domination of terrain gives him the advantage. For example, at this point White could consider the dangerous sacrifice 29 Re6 and if 29 ... Bxe6, 30 dxe6.

29 b4 cxb4 30 Rf3 Rf8
31 Rxe6 Bxe6 32 Qxb4 Rf7
33 Qc3 Qxc3 34 Rxc3 Rf1+
35 Qd2 Rf1 36 Rf2 Bf7
37 Nd7 Bx7 38 Bx6 Rxe5
39 Rf7 Kg6



40 Be5. Although Black appeared to have gained some respite by trading queens, the clumsy position of his bishops now leads to a forced loss of material.

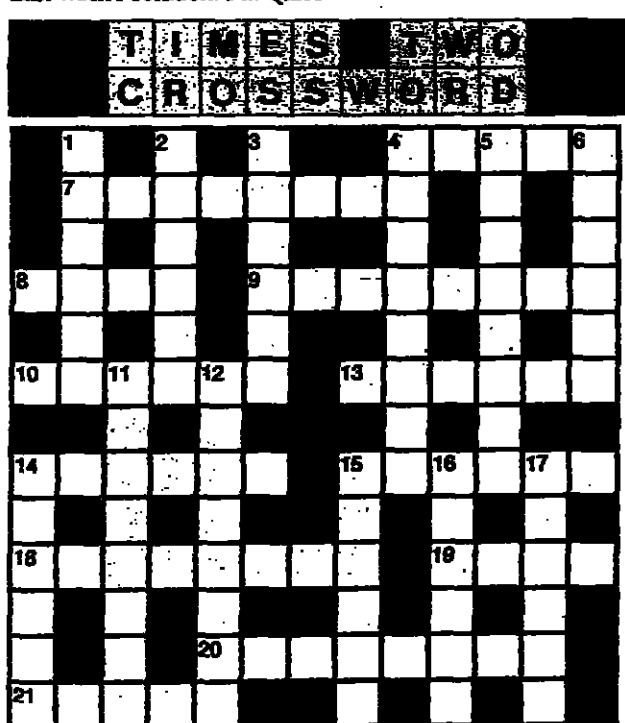
40 ... b5 41 d6 h6
42 Bx7 Kx7 43 Ne6 Kf6
44 Ne4 Kf5 45 Nf6 Kf5
46 Ne4 Kf5 47 d7 Rf5
48 Ne4 Kf5

Black resigns

By Raymond Keene
THIS position is from the game Kwiecinski - Roslinski, Poland 1954. White is actively placed, but with his counter-attack against the rook on e7, Black seems to have everything under control. How did White show that this is not the case? White to move.

Send your answers on a postcard to *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. The first three correct answers drawn on Thursday will win a British Chess Magazine publication. The answer will be published next Saturday.

Last week's solution: 1 ... Qxh4+



No 683

ACROSS

- 4 Off-the-cuff remark (2,3)
- 7 Kept alone (8)
- 8 Walk awkwardly; floppy (4)
- 9 Twin city of Sodom (5)
- 10 Vigorous scuffle (6)
- 13 Sword for thrusting (6)
- 14 Minister; dastardly (6)
- 15 Madrid money (6)
- 16 Prov. calm body of water (5)
- 19 Vegetable, Welsh symbol (4)
- 20 Staunch, dependable (8)
- 21 Upright (5)

DOWN

- 1 Social environment (6)
- 2 Body of writings; Oxford college (6)
- 3 Complicated mess (6)
- 4 Argue for (8)
- 5 French region, cross (8)
- 6 Take pains; a nuisance (6)
- 11 Slender (in design); not fattening (8)
- 12 Bedtime bugle call (4,4)
- 14 Inflamed spot on skin (6)
- 15 Pool of water (6)
- 16 Oriental obeisance (6)
- 17 Formal pact (6)

SOLUTION TO NO 682
ACROSS: 1 Retard 4 Xanadu 8 Brim 9 Glimmer 10 King James 13 Third 15 Cider 16 Break 18 Soliloquy 21 Square up 22 Jilt 23 Refute 24 Larynx

DOWN: 1 Rebuke 2 Triangle 3 Dogma 5 Ancestral 6 Alas 7 Unkind 11 Jack Sprat 12 Model 14 Inquiry 16 Bursar 17 Syntax 19 Impel 20 Gull

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READERS are invited to write an amusing caption for the cartoon (right). The cartoon, from the Punch library, includes the contemporary caption.

The caption will be printed again next week on the Games page with a caption selected from those submitted.

Send caption suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to: Cartoon caption (92), *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN

The editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, January 24.



"Welcome to Saga Holiday's first Gladiators theme weekend"
The winning caption for last week's cartoon (above) was submitted by R.H. Crockett of Beachy Head, E. Sussex

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

BUNKIE

- a. A truant, skiver
- b. A bunk-bed sharer
- c. A cake-fancier

FAVISM

- a. A broad-bean allergy
- b. A movement in painting
- c. A Finnish philosophical movement

GRIFFE

- a. A fifes throwback hair-do
- b. A claw-shaped ornament
- c. A guitar-strumming technique

BELLUM

- a. A tiny bell
- b. Almost beautiful
- c. A Persian canoe

Answers on page 10

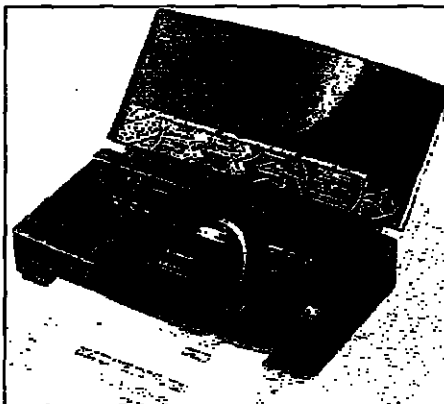
PUNCHLINE



"THE SHOUTY THE GROWL OF THE TROUBLE LEFT I PROBABLY GIVE"
"I'M SURE I'VE BEEN A TROUBLE"
"I'M SURE I'VE BEEN A TROUBLE"
"I'M SURE I'VE BEEN A TROUBLE"

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott



Cyberspace 20's Canon BJC-70 printer

Wings - From Midway to Hiroshima focuses on the final years of the Second World War incorporating the Pacific, European, North African and Russian Theatres of War. Wings - From Korea to Vietnam picks up the catalogue in 1945 and runs with the aviation action to 1975 detailing, among others, combat action in

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

THE *Sunday Times* Pairs tournament was devised 30 years ago to be the best event of its kind. Its descendant is the Macallan International Bridge Pairs Championship, now run in association with *The Times* and *The Sunday Times*. Seven of the 16 pairs competing this year are current World Champions.

This is a hand from the 1995 event, showing that even the best can muddle their entries on a bad day. The East-West pair, Meckstroth and Rodwell, won the tournament. Along with Hamman and Wolff, and Nickell and Freeman, they also won the 1995 Bermuda Bowl. The declarer was Pietro Forquet, a regular member of the great Italian Blue Team. They are all playing in the Macallan this year, alongside the People's Champions, Zia Mahmood and Omar Sharif.

Dir South East West Game Imps.

♠ KQJ4
♥ Q7653
♦ 4
♣ K76
♠ 653
♥ J108
♦ 10532
♣ 85
♠ A10972
♥ 42
♦ K97
♣ A93
♠ 8
♥ AK8
♦ AQJ6
♣ QJ1042

Contract: Four Spades doubled, by South.
Lead: eight of clubs

Forquet (South) opened One Spade and was raised to Four Spades. Rodwell (East) doubled and

Meckstroth (West) did the best he could do by passing - Five Diamonds goes for 800.

Forquet mistakenly won the club lead in hand. To set up his king of diamonds before the defence established their club trick, he had to cross to dummy with a trump. When he played a diamond from dummy, Rodwell went in with the ace and played a second club. The declarer now had to come to hand with a second trump to cash the king of diamonds. He then continued with a low heart. West put in the jack, covered by the queen and king. East continued by playing a third round of clubs, forcing dummy to ruff.

When declarer played a second round of hearts, East ducked, enabling West to win and play a third round of trumps. The declarer was restricted to five spade tricks in hand, the king of diamonds, the ace and king of clubs and one ruff. It was a good defence, but declarer does better to win the first club in dummy, and play a diamond. Then later the declarer plays a heart to the queen, and the defence can only get in two rounds of trumps. Thus the declarer gets one more ruff in dummy.

● The 1996 Macallan Pairs Championship will be played at the White House Hotel, Albany Street, London NW1, on January 24, 25 and 26. You can watch at the tables or in the Viewgraph theatre. Tickets are available from The Macallan Box Office, 31 Queens Road, Mortlake, London SW14 8PH. For information telephone 0181-878 5844.

Win a case of Macallan ten-year-old malt whisky. Bridge offer, page 12

feeling of authenticity. Moreover, the flight-sim elements are poor cousins to the genre.

This is the last call for Cyberspace Twenty, offering two top prizes of Canon BJC-70 colour bubble jet printers, worth around £250. Our winners, plus ten runners up, will also receive Brøderbund's Kids Pix Studio on CD-Rom. To enter you must predict three key events for the year: serious or humorous or of a personal, national or international nature. You should explain the reasons for your forecasts with clarity.

The competition is open to all ages and you must include your name, age, address and home telephone number. Entries should be sent to: Cyberspace Twenty, Computer Games and Pastimes, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN, and arrive by midnight on January 23. You may also fax entries on 0171-729 6791. Illegible entries will be disqualified and the judges will not enter into correspondence.

"War is, after all, the universal perversion ... war stories, the pornography of war," John Rae, 1960.

No. 3341: The Hunting of the Quark by Blank

QUARKS come in six flavours: Up and Down, which constitute the nucleus of normal matter; Strange (or Strange) and Charm (or Charm), which are to be entered as one-word anagrams; Top (or Truth), which are thematic. Lights are to be entered in the appropriate direction (to be determined), with the first letter entered in the numbered cell. Note THAT specific letters (never consecutive) should be barred, and do not occupy cells, and THAT you should not attempt to insert the normal bars at the end of the lights. In order to show that you have found the unique solution, delineate the clue that you have prudently unravelled; and beware what is at the end of it!

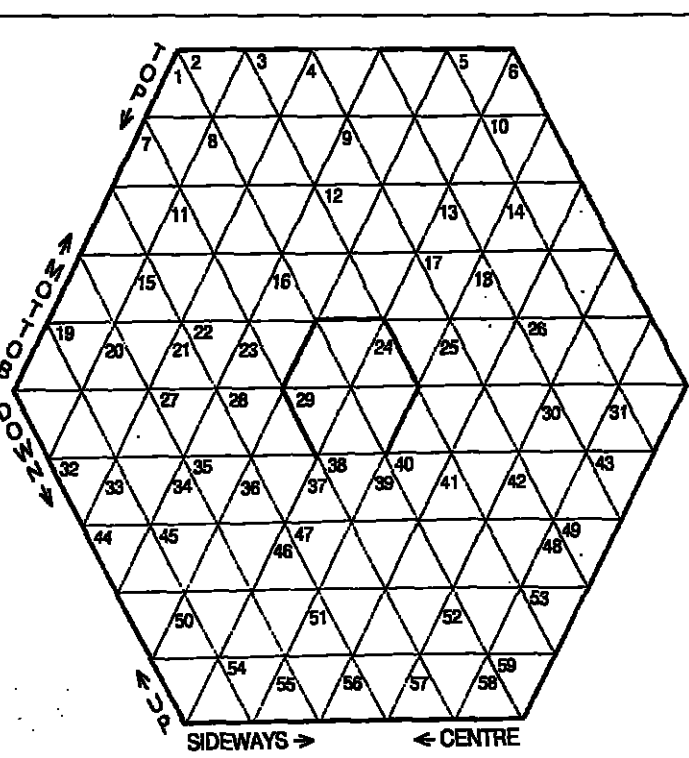
- 1 Judge eats finnan, and not water beetle (9)
- 1 What a plain sewer makes with water in a colourless medium (5,4)
- 2 Deeply fixed in grey sloth and ... (7)
- 2 ... has less than spine and only part of face (4)
- 3 Served at church in Christian times (4)
- 3 Confinement of giant charged particle separately in convulsive disorder (10)
- 5 It was Scrooge, hesitating, parting with wages, taxes (7)
- 6 Danced or sang or swagtered about first (8)
- 7 Possibly understated apron causing row with gun layer? (4)
- 8 Cry "welcome!" (5)
- 9 Rest line on support (5)
- 10 Reveller is one included in duty list with hesitation (9)
- 11 Metric areas are south of imperial ones - less cold (4)
- 12 Indian bread that's filling - on the contrary, it leaves empty (6)
- 12 Well-favoured girl in town in Australia (4)
- 13 Records widow's pay too (6)
- 14 Cut makes police officer Jose heart (4)
- 15 Degenerate king - he will be in pain first (8)
- 15 You've got nerves, going against headless priests! (4)
- 16 "Reticula": a person of standing is taken back by "nets" (7)
- 17 There's nothing in extra payments without profit or gifts (6)
- 17 Railway lies about natural killer in one locomotive (6)
- 18 Every one in for every informer? (7)
- 19 German strong enough to lift letter bag to top of wall (5)
- 20 It's not unknown to be a very hairy man (6)
- 21 St. John's children take off marks (6)
- 21 Brief moment in wrong direction had a decisive part (4)
- 22 Threatening if you start right at sea? (10)
- 23 Father almost always in for giver of money (5)
- 23 Old French in the manner of headless oaf (2)
- 24 Invader with project against English makes sacking (4)
- 25 Schubert's unstated - distracted by travelling news vendor (7)
- 25 The Underground? First, "the Underground": bizarre euphemism (4)
- 26 Second, it lets trains cross ramps as on regions of high ground (6)
- 27 A short poem in Milton's said to have amused very much (6)
- 28 Gave allowance for vehicle to soldiers with colour (5)
- 29 Victory memorial goes to waste away after execution (6)
- 29 To cry about falling profits (5)
- 30 Follow the scent of disoriented Turkish spirit (4)
- 31 Canadian carves abandoning Alaska for marini meals (4)
- 32 Pay the penalty for bodyguard in very deep water (5)
- 33 Gather associate wears incomplete badge (8)
- 34 A knave is a short man with chronic internal pain (5)
- 34 Stone for grinding, not at a boundary (4)
- 35 Contracts equals halfpence (5)
- 36 It's of little value for honoured monk to receive mass (4)
- 37 O throw a fish back in game with two sticks (7)
- 38 Old man, old salt, old soul (4)
- 38 Most of a small cake's acceptable for an Indian clerk (4)
- 39 Salmon fly, and break into pieces (5)
- 39 Erected mound round backward Chinese unit (5)
- 40 A parrot is a jackdaw with the base too far forward (5)
- 41 Squirrel's and pig's homes, but not yards, were once finished (5)
- 42 Person in ion serves beer with sharp edge instead of vermouth (7)
- 42 Freeman in a state about objection? On the contrary: the reverse (4)
- 43 Allotment alternately changes from lake to river and makes noise (4)
- 44 Moderate politicians embrace everything where the money is (7)
- 45 Ridge raised by stroke of pick (4)
- 46 Man! That's a right male pig! (4)
- 47 Against it, and not turning (4)
- 48 Ring for fastening threshold slit (6)
- 49 Bromine absorbing vapour locally yields less solvent (6)
- 50 In an inner room in a city, a Lord Mayor finds a town-crier (7)
- 51 Sacred quest of country girl: to embrace god (5)
- 52 Harmony man writes note after note after note reflectively (5)
- 53 Kind at heart - kiss or tell (4)
- 54 Jan's to endure the miserable place (5)
- 55 A thickies may be found on top of someone's head (5)
- 56 He scores billion gold marks: rare surprise, but doesn't take so long (14)
- 57 Set a sea back among horse's ribs (5)
- 58 Tax the loud of voice? Not (half) (5)
- 59 Succinct note about bitter veal (5)

Solution to No. 3338: A Commodius Vicus by Aragon

The puzzle's title is a reference to the "commodius vicus of recrudescence" which brings full-circle the narrative of the novel FINNEGAN'S WAKE by JAMES AUGUSTINE ALOYSIUS JOYCE. Across lights had their own "recrudescence", wrapping round the edge of the diagram where necessary and interlocking with "A LONG THE RIVER RUN", the last and first words of the novel, which can, of course, be found if you "READ THE FIRST AND LAST SENTENCES" as directed by the down letters. The passage of across clues was itself circular, the first word doubling as the last, as hinted at by the punctuation.

ACROSS: the 27 redundant words were: Just, amiable must, extend, suspects, announcement, unlikely, gentlemen, unfavourably, session, terribly, irrelevant, nitwits, essentially, amoral, long-haul, outgiving, Yallah, swiftly, inelegant, unknown, shameless, judgment, outwardly, you, callous, Euryscan - spelling "JAMES AUGUSTINE ALOYSIUS JOYCE".

The winner is K. Mackenzie of Dunblane, Perthshire. The runners-up are D.A.T. Miller of Belfast and A.R. Mills of Crettingham, Suffolk.



LISTENER CROSSWORD No. 3341

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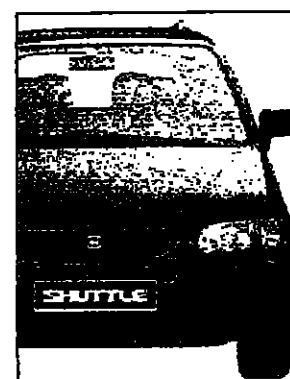
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Page 3



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Page 9



SATURDAY JANUARY 20 1996

Passing their test immediately puts young people at risk. Kevin Eason and Hugh Hunston report



Crash course of experience: "I don't know if the car went off the road, but in a split second I was upside down," says Ellie Churchley. "I started to panic because I couldn't open the doors. Now I go everywhere at a maximum of 40 miles an hour"

Dangerous years on life's highway

Ellie Churchley was free at last, driving her own little car alone. Just three weeks after passing her test, the 17-year-old was cruising along a country lane when she leant forward to adjust the heater controls on her Mini... and seconds later woke up to find the car upside down in a ditch.

Weeks later, she still has no idea what exactly happened, just that the car suddenly flipped over. But that moment's lapse of concentration could have cost Ellie her life and added her name to the horrific list of deaths and casualties among Britain's young people.

Car accidents are the biggest cause of death and injury among people up to the age of 25. Department of Transport figures show that 28 per cent of drivers killed and seriously injured during 1994 came from the 17 to 25 age group.

Young drivers often slip through their driving test, exhibiting enviable skill in operating the machinery of the car. The new written theory test, which is introduced from July 1, will also help force youngsters to study rules, regulations — and etiquette — of the road that many would probably have got away with overlooking in the past. They will need knowledge of everything from road signs to the effects of drugs and alcohol on a driver and how they can cut pollution from their cars. Ministers hope that deeper understanding will help to create a pool of drivers more expert than any that has gone before.

Every young driver is cursed from the moment they tear up their L-plates, condemned to joining the most accident-prone group of people in Britain, their destructive blend of overconfidence and inexperience at the wheel pitting the odds against them, as Ellie discovered.

"I was driving along quite happily when I wanted to change the heater," remembers Ellie, who lives in Warwickshire. "I don't know whether the car went off the road, but in a split second I was upside down. I started to panic because I couldn't open the doors. The car was wedged in a ditch up against a hedge. A few minutes, I wound the window down and climbed out into the hedge, getting really scratched and then I waited by the roadside. Fortunately, a couple came along and picked me up because I was very shocked by then although, luckily, I was unharmed."

"The experience was so traumatic that Ellie did not drive again for nearly three months. She says: "I have started to get my confidence back recently, but when I passed my test I wasn't nervous at all about driving on my own. I felt fine. Now, especially if the weather is bad, I go everywhere at a maximum of 40 miles an hour."

It would seem common sense to assume that little can be done to

combat such inexperience — only hours at the wheel can solve that. But knowing when a car is likely to break away into a skid, discovering when to fiddle with the radio or simply put up with Terry Wogan for the sake of safety, and when to keep speeds down to stay out of an unpleasant shunt can be taught by organisations such as the Institute of Advanced Motorists, which can turn driving into an enjoyable art as much as a mechanical exercise.

Cars are the biggest cause of death up to 25

Overconfidence is a trickier problem — and British youngsters are full of it, according to the results of a study published this week by the European Union. Researchers discovered that 11 per cent of 5,500 novice motorists across 15 EU countries reckoned they were very safe drivers. But 16 per cent of the 500 British youngsters questioned judged themselves to be among the driving élite. Asked if they were "fairly safe", 76.5 per cent of the Brits answered yes, but the average for the rest of Europe was just 47 per cent.

Whether British drivers believe that admitting to being a bad driver is like admitting to never having had sex we will never know, but youngsters have clearly picked up the syndrome that exhibits itself in every pub, golf club and boardroom: apparently, nobody is ever a bad driver.

Even taking the wheel with only hundreds, rather than tens, of thousands, of miles behind them, youngsters could not admit to having any failings on the road: only 0.2 per cent said that they could be "unsafe".

How they view the car also gave the research team, headed by Neil Kinnock, the EU's new transport commissioner, cause for severe depression, with 27 per cent saying they thought of cars as "being just like toys".

To encourage young drivers to take the business of getting behind the wheel more seriously, the EU introduced its own competition, which culminated this week in a final in Brussels. Two Britons — Darren Steeles, 18, from Norfolk, and Gail Harris, 23, from Walsall, West Midlands — took part in the day of tests, but failed to get among the prizes. Ironically, a young man from Austria, the country with the worst car fatality rate among his European peer group, won the Young Driver of the Year competition.

With the carrot of encouragement, though, came the stick. Camille Blum, secretary-general of the European Car Makers' Association, warned that 13,000 young drivers were killed every year on western Europe's roads, another 560,000 injured.

If those statistics do not convince young drivers to slow down and take care, nothing will.

SIX TESTING QUESTIONS: HOW THE EXPERTS SCORED

YOUNGSTERS taking their driving test will be confronted with a written theory test for the first time this summer. But how would the professionals fare if their memory banks were examined by a sample from the 35-question test?

Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, owner of the National Motor Museum in Hampshire, scored four out of six. Failed on factual questions such as the minimum depth of tread for car tyres and the legal blood alcohol limit. Welcomed the test as "quite a good idea" and "a step in the right direction", although not convinced the right questions were being set.

Jeremy Clarkson, presenter of BBC's *Top Gear* programme, scored five out of six, failing only to identify the correct blood alcohol limit. "Anything which makes the road safer has got to be a good thing," he said. "The important thing is that the driving licence is regarded as a privilege, not a right."

Max Mosley, president of the FIA, the world governing body for motor racing, scored six out of six. "Anyone who didn't get a very high proportion right really ought to be made to go back and start their lessons again," he commented.



Montagu: right questions?



Moss: "logical and sensible"



Clarkson: "It's a privilege"



Mosley: six out of six

The questions we asked:
1. To supervise a learner driver, you MUST (select two answers): Have held a full licence for at least three years (correct), be at least 21 (correct), be an approved driving instructor, hold an advanced driving certificate.
2. The legal minimum depth of tread for car tyres is: 2.2 mm, 4 mm, 1mm, 1.6mm (correct).
3. In fog in daylight, you should use: sidelights, full beam headlights, hazard lights, dipped headlights (correct).
4. You are going straight ahead at a roundabout. How should you signal? Right at the approach and then left to leave the roundabout; left as you leave the exit off the roundabout; left on the approach to the roundabout and keep the signal on until you leave; left as you pass the exit before the one you will take (correct).
5. What is the maximum legal level of alcohol in your blood: 50 mg per 100 ml, 60 mg per 100 ml, 80 mg per 100 ml (correct), 90 mg per 100 ml.
6. You are overtaking a motorcyclist. What should you do? Try to pass on a bend, move over to the opposite side of the road, pass by as quickly as possible, give as much room as you would for a car (correct).

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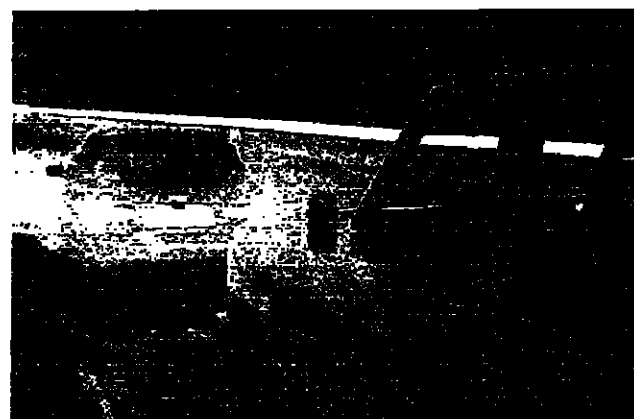
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AA GRIDLOCK GUIDE

● **LONDON**
A40 Western Avenue, Acton. Major roadworks with contraflow between Hilary Road in Acton and the Northern roundabout in White City.
A406 North Circular Road, Upper Edmonton. Major roadworks continue over the Lea Valley Viaduct.
A406 North Circular Road, Finchley. Major roadworks continue with various restrictions between the A1 and A1000 junctions.
A240 Kingston Road, Tolworth. Major roadworks with lane closures in both directions between Jubilee Way and Worcester Park Road.
A315 Glenhorne Road, Hammersmith. One lane closed in the one-way system at the junction with Hammersmith Grove.
● **SOUTH-EAST**
M4 Berkshire. Major roadworks and contraflow between junctions 6 and 8/9 cause lengthy tailbacks daily.
M25 Surrey. Lane closures and contraflows between junctions 6 and 8 and junctions 9 and 10.
A27 East Sussex. Major roadworks at Fife, between Selmeiston and Lewes, with temporary traffic lights.
A249 Kent. Major works at the Stockbury roundabout west of Sittingbourne often cause lengthy hold-ups between the M2 and Kingsferry Bridge.
A36 Hampshire. Bridge repairs at Wellow, north-west of Southampton.
● **SOUTH-WEST**
M4/M5 Avon. Work on new Second Severn crossing continues, with restrictions around Almondsbury and Aust interchanges, and also on the M5 around junction 18.
M32 Avon. Widening work continues on link between junction 19 of the M4 and Bristol city centre, with lane closures and restrictions.
M5 Somerset. Bridge repairs with lane closures both ways between junctions 21 and 22.
M5 Somerset. Roadworks with lane closures either side of junction 23.
A4 Wiltshire. Roadworks and temporary lights in Calne town centre at the Market Hill junction and on Sandy Lane.
A377 Devon. Roadworks continue between Exeter and Barnstaple.
A39 Cornwall. Water company are digging up the road at Meads, just north of Bude with temporary traffic lights.
● **MIDLANDS AND EAST ANGLIA**
A38 Hereford/Worcester. Roadworks with temporary lights south of Worcester and along the Redditch Road in Bromsgrove.
M6 West Midlands. Major roadworks continue between junctions 5 and 6 with lane restrictions in both directions.
M1 Leicestershire. Final stages of the major roadworks underway with lane restrictions in

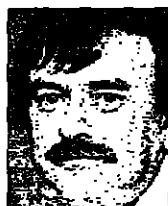
both directions between junctions 21 and 22.
A563 Leicestershire. Roadworks and contraflow on Lubberthorpe Way, Leicester between the Dumbell Island and the A47 Hinckley Road junction.
A47 Norfolk. Two sets of major roadworks, at Terrington St John and at Swaffham.
A11 Norfolk. Construction of Wymondham bypass continues, with lane and speed restrictions between Hethersett and Attleborough.
● **NORTH**
M1 West Yorkshire. Roadworks and contraflow at the end of the motorway at junction 47.
M6 Cheshire. Widening work continues between junctions 20 and 22.
M6 Greater Manchester. Roadworks and lane closures between junctions 24 and 26.
M6 Lancashire. Reduced to two lanes in each direction for work to the overhead gantries between junctions 28 and 30.
M65 Greater Manchester. Roadworks between junctions 4 and 5 with two lanes open each way.
A167M Tyneside. From January 21 northbound lane closures on the Newcastle Central motorway near the Jesmond Road interchange for bridge repairs.
● **WALES**
M4 Gwent. Widening work continues in connection with the second Severn crossing between junctions 22 and 24.
A449 & A40 Gwent. Major roadworks on the Newport to Monmouth route, with traffic reduced to a single lane.
A48 West Glamorgan. Construction work with lane closures on all approaches to the Wychtree roundabout at Morriston.
A483 West Glamorgan. Major roadworks and contraflow on Fabian Way, Swansea between Elba Crescent and the interchanges with the A48.
A550 Ceredigion. Construction of interchange between Woodbank and Queensferry means lane restrictions and a 40mph limit.
A547 Gwynedd. Bridge repairs with temporary lights near the A55 junction at Llandudno Junction.
● **SCOTLAND**
M8 Strathclyde. Roadworks with lane closures in both directions between junctions 26 and 27.
A741 Strathclyde. Major repairs to the M8 bridge on Rannoch Road in Paisley will cause delays.
Motherwell, Strathclyde. Airbles Road reduced to a single lane each way for major roadworks.
M90 Tayside. Major roadworks at junction 10 with lane closures in both directions.
A945 Grampian. Riverside Drive, Aberdeen closed for demolition work at Wellington Bridge.

In two seconds I can now tell you the best way from Jersey to Orkney via Stonehenge and Chorlton-cum-Hardy

The theoretical means of travel

Depart Jersey airport, bear left on to B36, turn right on to A12, turn left on to A1, turn right on to ...

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION



Peter Barnard

ferry. A page of instructions later, we discover: At Stromness, turn off on to A965, arrive Kirkwall. Just when you thought you knew everything you needed to know about driving, this column confounds that belief by offering some edited highlights from a route.

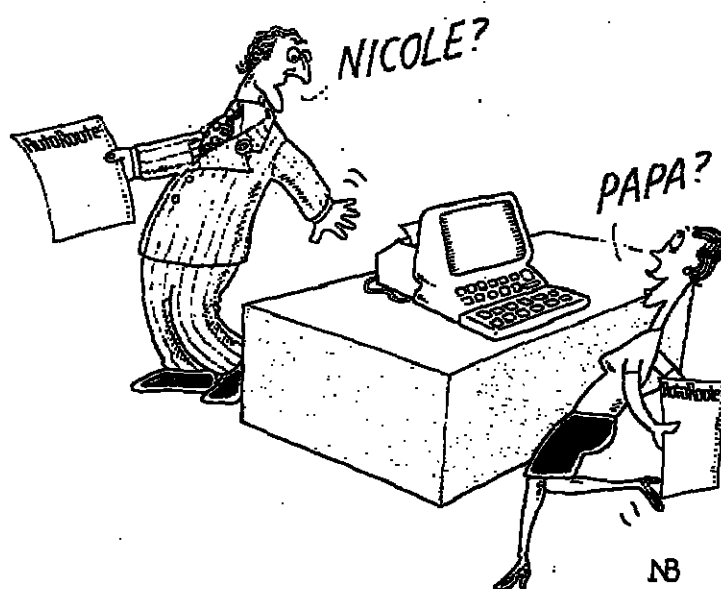
Not everyone will have an immediate use for the route from Jersey to Orkney (773 miles taking two days, six hours and 47 minutes including stopovers), but if it can be done it will be done and I have just acquired a computer program that can do it.

The program is called AutoRoute Express and it comes from Microsoft, the company that has made Bill Gates one of the richest men in the world. There are other route planners like this one and I do not presume to endorse one rather than another. I do know that AutoRoute is more fun than sitting in a traffic jam.

Once you have entered start point,

destination and a couple of other parameters — such as whether you want the fastest or the shortest route — AutoRoute computes the journey and you can print it out as a map and as text. The program produces the route in less than two seconds.

You can even ask it to build in specified places, such as beauty spots or even football grounds. Thus do I have before me a route from Plymouth to The Times office in London taking in Plymouth Argyle, Torquay



them to be spot on. But Jersey to Orkney offered a ferry crossing from Jersey to south Devon which is non-existent, thus throwing out the next stage of the route to the M5. The ferry goes to Weymouth, and if you ask for a route via Weymouth the program owns up.

So the software is not infallible, which I offer as a comfort rather than a criticism. Best of all, if you ask AutoRoute for beauty spots within a specified distance of your route it offers excellent colour pictures. So much easier than going there.

MONTHS ago, when I went to Newbury for this column, I predicted that the chaos surrounding the new bypass would be even worse than that which happened at Bathaston, which, incidentally, is nearing completion despite the efforts of Rent-a-Mob. Lo, it has come to pass.

The police operation at Newbury is costing no less than £30,000 a week and, because the force is on a fixed annual budget, that money has to be diverted from elsewhere. This is madness. The cost of policing road-building ought to be carried by the Highways Authority and built into the cost of the project itself.

To that extent, I agree with the protesters, who argue that the "real" cost of roads is understated. Stand by for a rise in crime elsewhere around Newbury being blamed, *de facto*, on the pressure for roads.

Low interest rates and high profits have created an upmarket sales boom, says Kevin Eason

Luxury wheels roll again

Sales of the most expensive cars on the market to highly-paid executives are returning to the levels of the boom years of big City spending.

While average private buyers, worried by unemployment and the economy, stayed away from showrooms last year, boardroom chairmen and directors were replacing their limousines and executive company cars. Flushed by lower interest rates and their firms' higher profits.

Undisclosed motor industry figures show that spending on luxurious executive cars, such as Mercedes, Jaguars and Rolls-Royces, jumped by £800 million last year.

Total new car registrations last year grew by just 1.9 per cent — 34,433 cars. But registrations in the executive and luxury sector — traditionally classed as models costing £25,000 or more — jumped 16 per cent to 233,003, an increase of 32,086 cars.

But there was an even bigger resurgence for the most luxurious models, which are bought almost exclusively by companies for their executives. Registrations of cars in the top luxury sector, which includes models such as the Daimler Double Six, Mercedes S-class, Bentley and Rolls-Royce — which can cost up to

Spending on the most luxurious cars rose by £800m

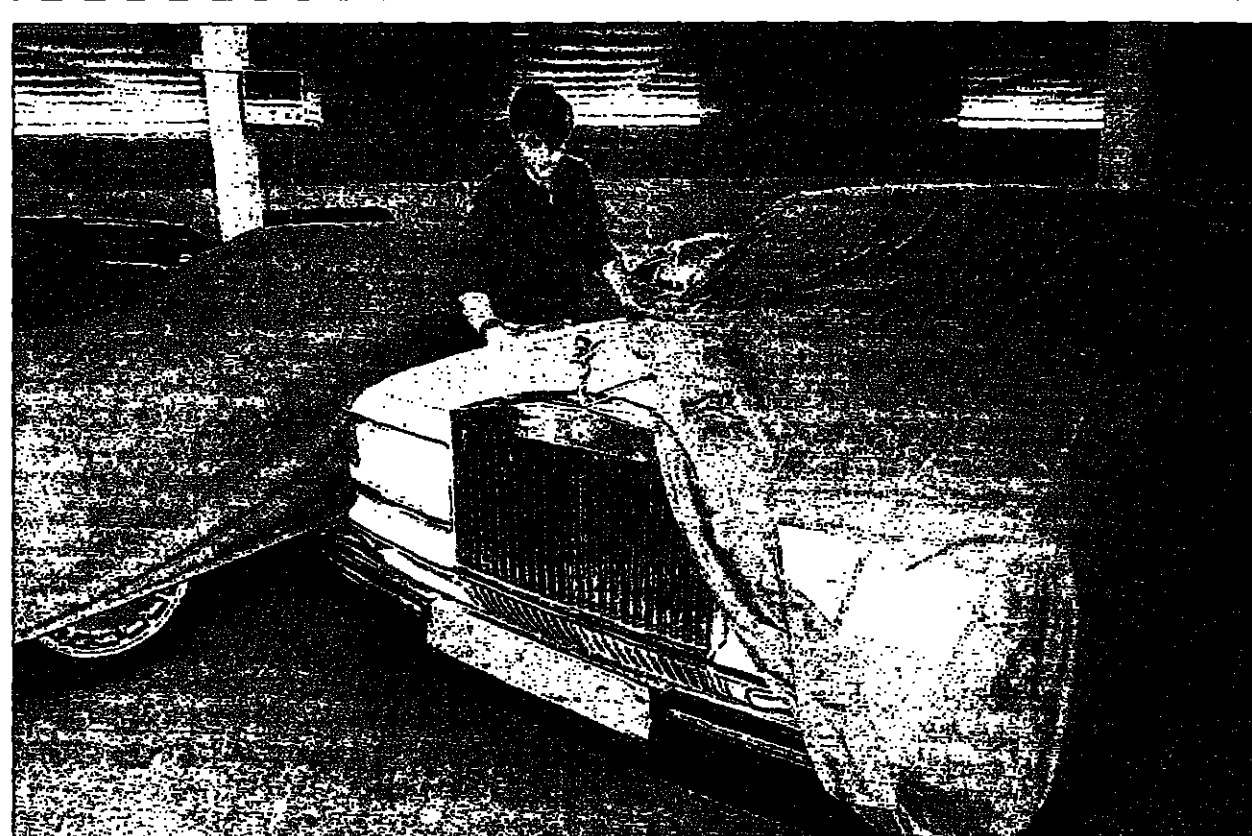
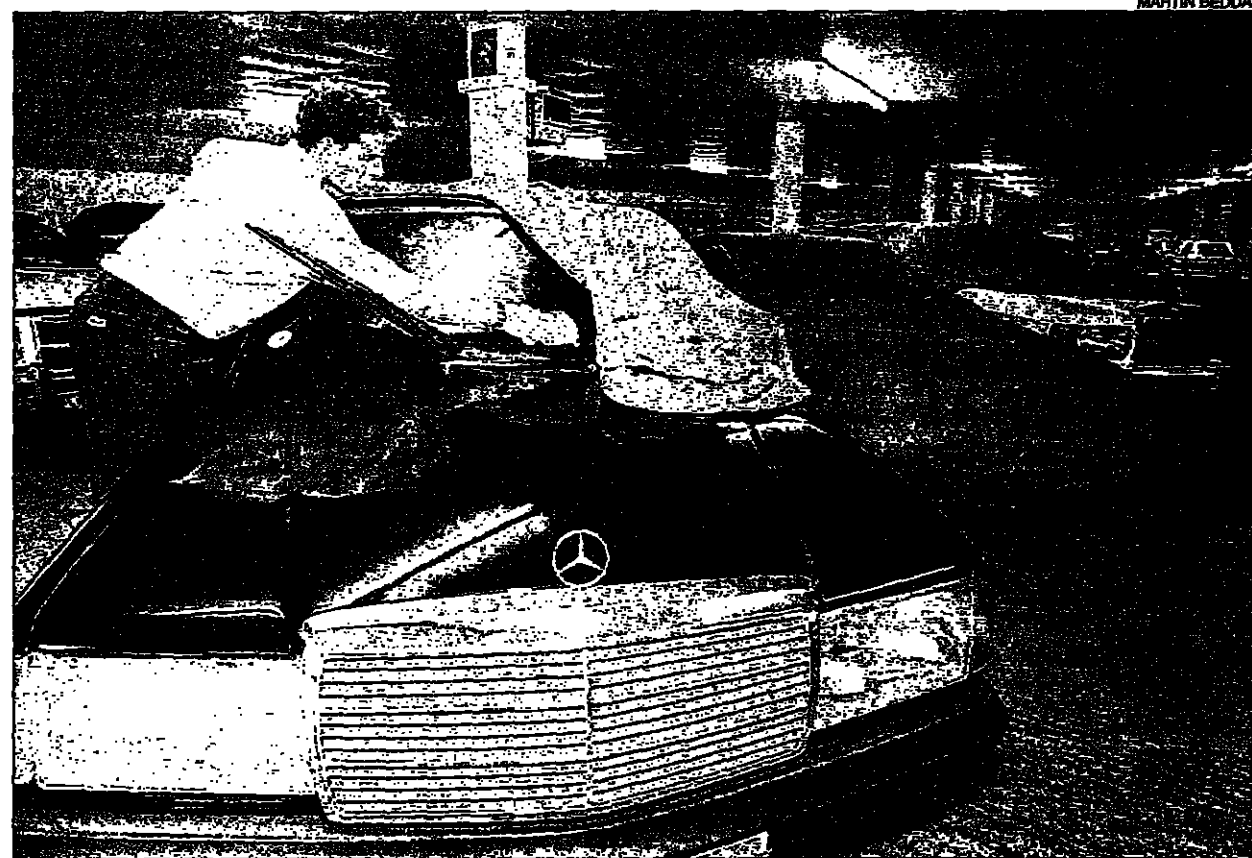
£100,000 — jumped 34 per cent to 15,545.

The success of executive and luxury models is in stark contrast to the fortunes of makers of family saloons and hatchbacks. Registrations of Fords, Vauxhalls and Rovers were all down last year, while Audi, Mercedes and BMW enjoyed record sales years. Jaguar sales were up from 6,659 in 1994 to 8,727, and Rolls-Royce, which suffered heavy losses in the recession, saw sales up to almost 500 cars.

The return of the luxury car is the most unexpected bonus in a market which was widely seen as stagnant and unlikely to get back to its 1988 peak of 2.3 million registrations. But company cars are the driving force in the market place, accounting for an estimated 75 per cent of all sales.

However, it seems that while spending on company fleets has increased recently, investment in cars for the boardroom has been even greater, much to the delight of companies such as Jaguar and Mercedes. Carmakers say that the luxury market has not enjoyed such high sales since the tail-end of the boom in 1990, and was on course for even bigger sales next year.

Mercedes-Benz sold more than 32,000 cars last year, the highest annual figure since the company came to Britain, which included a 34 per cent increase for its most expensive model, the S-Class limousine, with prices ranging between £38,000 and £99,000. The company also sold 1,000 SL



Fit for the boss: sales of the world's most expensive executive cars have been given an additional gloss of success

sports cars, worth an average of £50,000 each.

Hans Tauscher, managing director of the company's British subsidiary, says: "It is true that there is still no confidence among average buyers, but our customers are business people and they see an economy with no inflation, low interest rates and their profits are good."

"They are coming back into the market place and re-stocking their fleets which has meant very good sales for manufacturers of high-quality large cars."

Len Hunt, director of Audi, which sold 25,555 cars, added: "People have been predicting that this market would fall because of changes to taxation and drivers wanting to downsize their cars. But the market has gone very well for us."

and over higher mileages during the recession has been discounted by manufacturers. They say that companies have returned to the traditional two-year replacement cycle, leading to higher fleet sales.

Without such sales, the motor industry would have been going into its centenary year facing a struggle, for manufac-

turers still cannot attract ordinary private buyers, even though they are spending millions of pounds on discounts and promotions, such as free insurance, cheap finance and special equipment. Sales of company cars went up last year by 6.3 per cent — but showroom sales to private buyers fell 3 per cent, the

equivalent of 27,000 cars worth a total of £240 million. Not that the struggle has prevented carmakers from raising prices. Vauxhall has announced that its models will go up by an average 2 per cent from Monday, while Nissan cars are already more expensive, by amounts varying from 0.8 per cent to 2.1 per cent.

Fiesta in the style of Mazda

Hugh Hunston on a Ford clone

FOR FORD Fiesta read Mazda 121, courtesy of a reworked bonnet and grille, different front bumpers, hatchback tailgate and the all-important grab handle. The interior trim is also Mazda's own choice.

It has taken the Hiroshima-based company more than ten years of agonising before joining the Japanese "transplant" club in Europe. With a thinly disguised Fiesta, built by Ford at Dagenham, Essex, as the outcome of this soul-searching, the world premiere of the 121 in Brussels this week was underwhelming. Mazda "will get 25,000 Fiesta clones annually from Dagenham to supply the European market and build a presence that has been lacking in this part of the globe while Toyota, Honda, Nissan and Mitsubishi have all built their own manufacturing bases here."

Peter Birwhistle, chief designer at Mazda's European design studio in Oberursel,



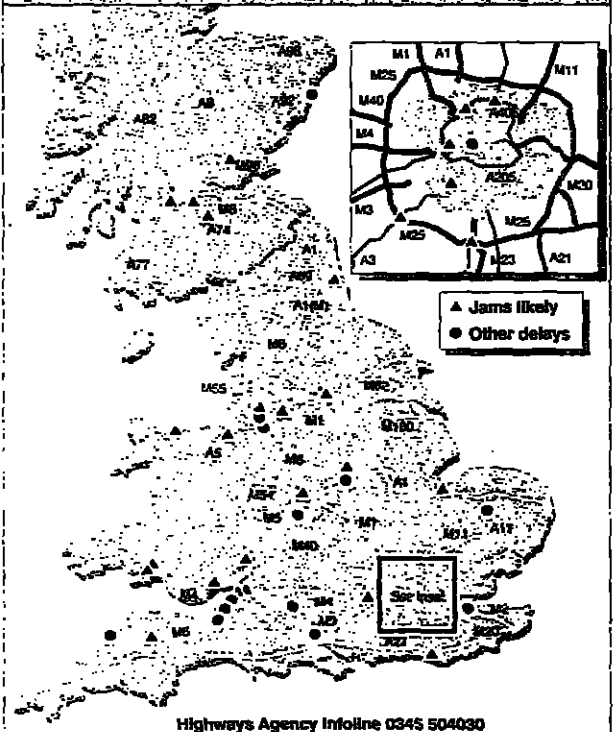
Mazda 121: Fiesta with a "more friendly look"

Germany, claims the mild makeover gives the 121 Fiesta clone a "more friendly look". That implies that the fish-mouth grille, Fiesta has a hostile appearance. What the Mazda does benefit from includes the unquestioned driving refinement of Ford's baby car, big car build quality and the sewing-machine-smooth 1.25-litre, 16-valve Zetec petrol engine.

THIS state-of-the-art unit will be matched to the Ford CTX (constantly variable) automatic transmission. Due on sale in Britain on March 22, the 121's pricing will presumably dovetail with its corporate sibling. The less sophisticated 1.3-litre petrol unit is also on offer, plus Ford's trusty 1.8-litre diesel, while there are two trim levels — all Mazda's own work — to choose from.

Projected UK sales of 3,500 121s this year will help to bring Mazda up into the second division of carmakers operating on the UK, selling around 22,500 vehicles.

MAJOR ROADWORKS



NEWS IN BRIEF

Feeling flat

YOU COULD be reading this while waiting for your friendly local breakdown man to arrive, because the AA reckons that it answered distress calls from 609,500 motorists last year whose batteries were flat — a rate of just over one a minute. Flat batteries were far and away Britain's biggest reason for breaking down with tyres next with 154,860 callouts, keys 152,300, fuel 93,700 and starter motors 93,230.

VW leads Europe

VOLKSWAGEN is Europe's biggest carmaker, according to latest figures. The company improved sales by 4.6 per cent last year to more than 2.14 million vehicles. VW has been Europe's number one for the past ten years and keeps on growing, not only selling under its own prestigious badge, but also owning Audi, Seat of Spain and the Czech manufacturer and once the butt of industry jokes, Skoda.

Honda ahead

A RESURGENCE in registrations of motorcycles has put Honda on top of the sales league. Sales of bikes jumped by almost 10 per cent last year to 53,721 with Honda capturing a 26.4 per cent share of the market with five machines — the CB600F, Fireblade, SH450, C90 and VFR750F — taking the top five places in the list of bestsellers.

Packed Ladas

IT MIGHT be unloved by many, but the Lada has become one of the bestselling cars of all time. Sales of the Russian-built saloons and hatchbacks, have now topped 11 million worldwide since the first car rolled off the huge production lines at Togliatti in 1970. The bulk of production, of course, found homes in countries hidden behind the old Iron Curtain, but Ladas have had their devoted followers here too: the company sold around 10,000 in Britain last year.

AUTOFAX by Les Evans and David Long

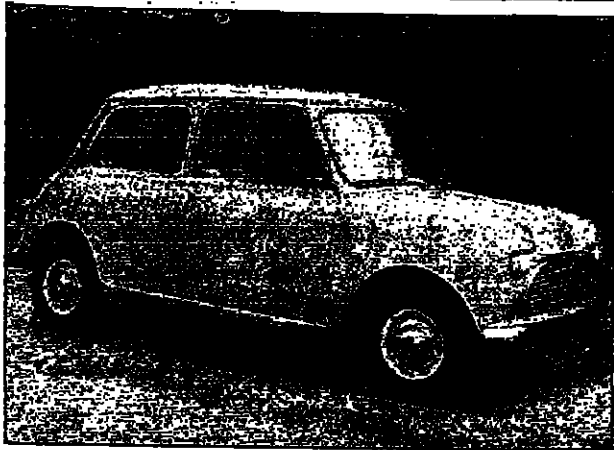
AN EARLY PROTOTYPE OF THE JAGUAR C-TYPE WAS TESTED ON THE MAIN RUNWAY AT HEATHROW WHEN IT REACHED 120 mph ...

THE FIRST RACING MONARCH TO BUY A CAR WAS EDWARD VII WHO BOUGHT A ROLLS ROYCE AFTER BEING TOWN FOR A RIDE BY A COUSIN MANUFACTURER IN A BROWN CAR.

IN OCTOBER 1967 THE FIRST ROLLS ROYCE PHANTOM WAS DELIVERED TO THE QUEEN AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE IN A RED CHAMPAGNE DAVEN HALL ...

IN 1936 ALFA ROMEO, BELIEVING QUALITY AND QUANTITY TO BE MUTUALLY INCOMPATIBLE, BUILT JUST 10 CARS ...

THESE WE HAVE LOVED THE TOP 20 FROM A CENTURY OF BRITISH CARMaking



The Mink: Alex Issigonis turned the engine sideways and created a package much copied but never bettered. Still a cult car nearly 37 years after it was launched.



Morris Minor: William Morris, who later became Lord Nuffield, told Issigonis it looked "like a poached egg", but from 1948 the company made over 1.6 million.



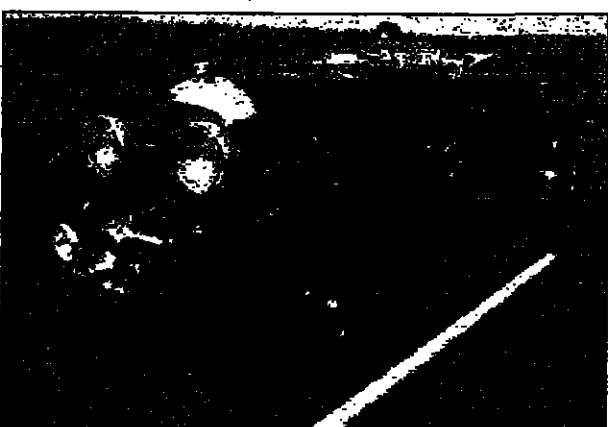
Austin 7: Launched in 1922 for £165, it helped to save the company. Its appearance meant that thousands of people could get on to four wheels for the first time.



Land Rover: Spencer and Maurice Wilks only wanted a vehicle to keep their Rover factory busy after the war. They ended up with an aluminium-bodied legend.



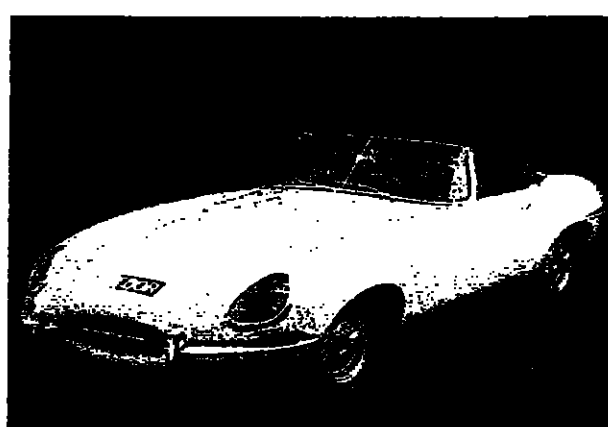
Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost: Proclaimed the best in the world and, 90 years after it was launched, it still commands the greatest respect of all British marques.



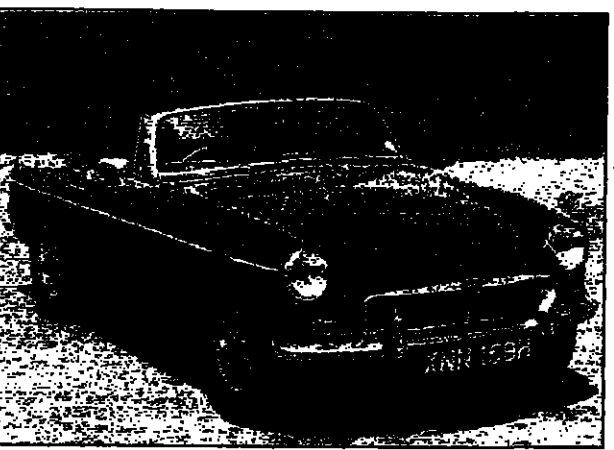
Bentley Le Mans: Few cars capture the imagination like the famed Blower Bentleys. To this day, W.O. Bentley is remembered with his own square in the French town.



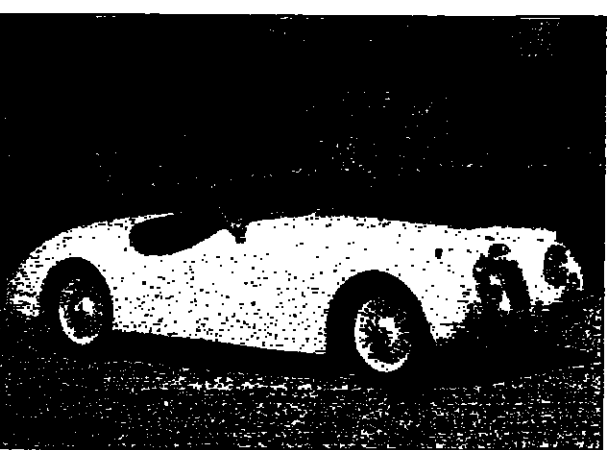
Aston Martin DB5: James Bond made it famous, but those clean curves remain as beautiful today as they were when David Brown (DB) launched the classic.



Jaguar E-Type: The first 150mph production car with an aerodynamic shape that knocked everyone out in 1960. No carmaker has matched its speed and impact.



MGB: Still around in huge numbers even though the model has not been made for 15 years. Define a two-seater and it is difficult to escape the MGB package.



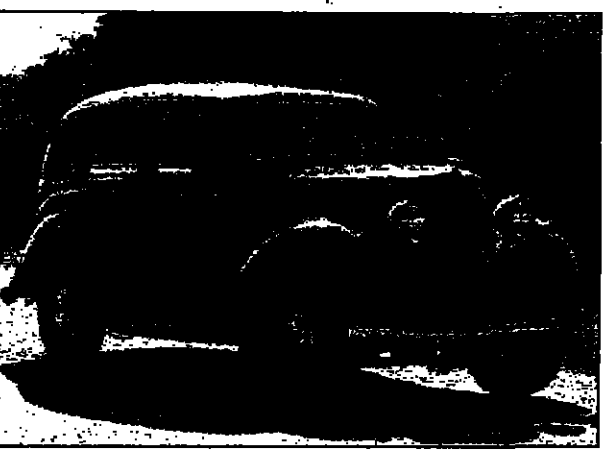
Jaguar XK120: Sir William Lyons proved his touch of genius with the XK120. Jaguar was a young company, but the XK120 established the name at the top of hierarchy.



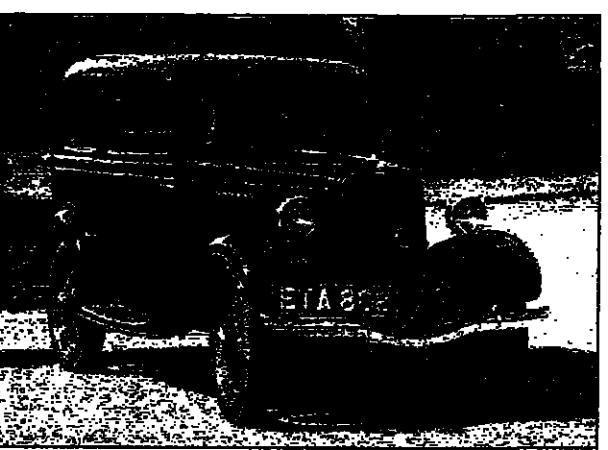
Rover P6: Better known as the Rover 2000, the P6 emerged unscathed from the chaos of the UK motor industry in the 1960s. Its angular looks remain distinctive.



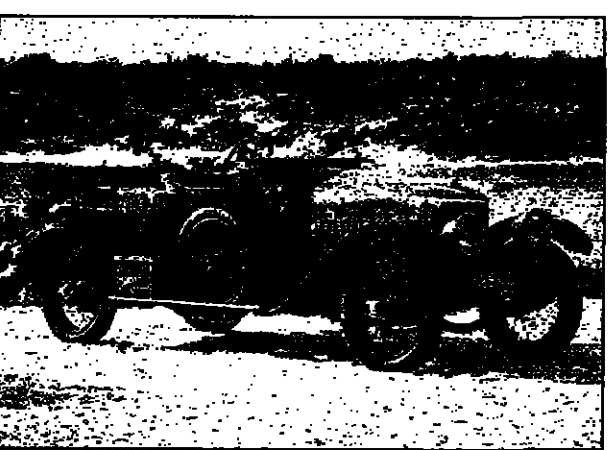
Triumph Herald: From Britain's most modern factory, with closed-circuit television watching bodies move along a new Standard Triumph assembly line at Coventry.



Hillman Minx: The Rootes brothers' most successful car, the 10-horsepower Minx of 1932 was launched with a price tag of £159 and became an immediate best-seller.



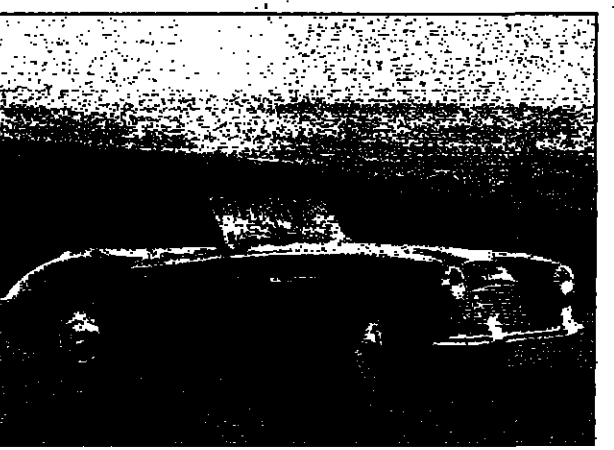
Ford Model Y: The first British car from Ford. The Ship Model Y was launched in 1932, three years later the company cut the price of the two-door saloon to £100.



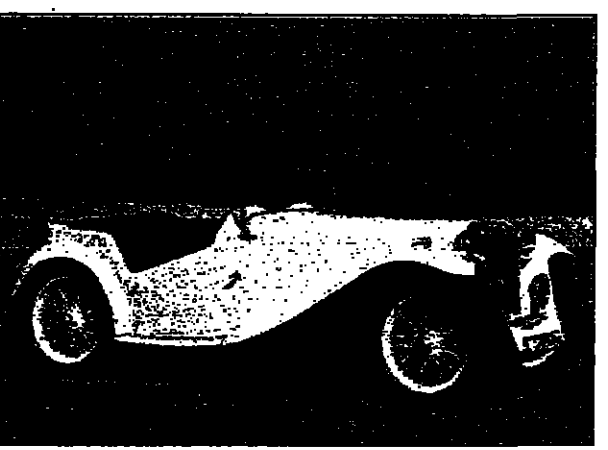
Vauxhall Prince Henry: Probably Britain's first real sports car, introduced in 1911 and named after a German speed trial on roads the previous year.



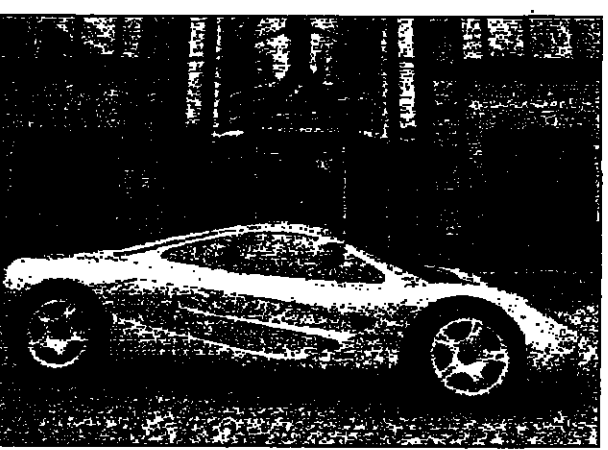
Standard Vanguard: Those fat flanks and the bulbous bonnet made the Vanguard one of the most recognisable post-war cars, selling more than 250,000.



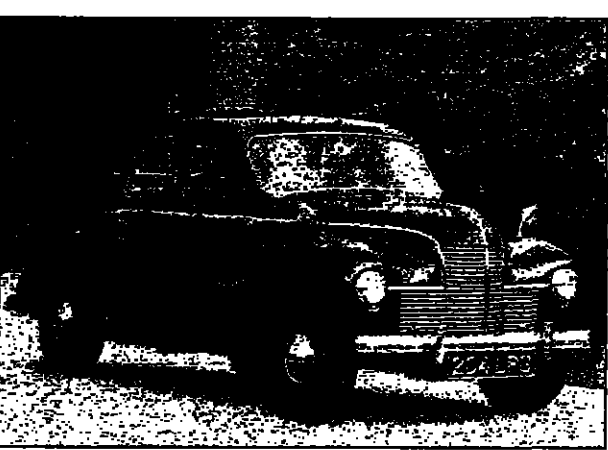
Austin Healey 3000: Simply beautiful. Donald Healey joined forces with Austin in 1952 to produce the Healey 100. The definitive 3000 was glamorous and powerful.



MG TC: The original advertising slogan was "Safety fast", adopted now for the MGF. It was the company's first car after the war and became an immediate classic.



McLaren F1: The most expensive British car, but it has everything — technology, Le Mans-winning endurance and beauty. Also, at 231mph, the fastest production car.



Jowett Javelin: Jowett threw away traditional car design in 1947. The Javelin's styling was aircraft influenced, while the 1.5-litre flat four gave a top speed of 80mph.

It is the ultimate fantasy league for motorists: 100 years' worth of cars from which to choose a list of the best 20 models ever made in Britain, write Kevin Eason. The task was set so that the City Council at Coventry, official home of the British motor car, could show off the marques that made the nation's reputation as a manufacturer of fine motors during this week's centenary celebrations.

But where do you start? Naming the top 20 cars is as much a subject for heated pub debate as trying to select the England soccer team. Everyone has a favourite and a reason why it should be in the list. The council asked readers of *Classic and Sportscar* magazine to vote and were, not surprisingly, inundated with suggestions.

Some of the choices were predictable — nobody was surprised when the Mini topped the poll — but there were dozens of eligible

classics that simply didn't make it into the league table. Worse still for the modern motor industry, only one recently-designed car — the McLaren F1 — was selected, and that is hardly a "people's car" at a price of £634,500. The Land Rover is there, but that was invented and designed nearly half a century ago. For the rest, the MGB, which went out of production in 1980, is as close as the list gets to a modern car.

Maybe the mists of time have helped drivers to forget just how basic motoring was when most of their favourite cars were made — or maybe they are the sort of cars that we have forgotten how to make. Where are the voluptuous cars of today, the ground-breakers, the memorable models that stick forever in the mind and make people smile as they pass? There are precious few, to be honest... unless you look into the price category where six figures will buy a Bentley Azure, a Jaguar XJ220 or a McLaren.

Cars such as the Morris Minor were not just bestsellers; they established an indelible character which has never been forgotten by the motoring public. Has there been a recent, reasonably-priced model with a design as exciting and different as the Jowett Javelin, or even the muscular Standard Vanguard?

Nowadays, making a car is like pressing jelly out of the mould, model after model that looks just like the one next to it, often sharing the same floorpan, engines, switchgear and body styles. In the good old days, carmaking was often profligate and clumsy — but at least the carmakers had style. The curves on a 1950s Jaguar or Aston Martin are unmistakable, the lines of an MGB an indelible image that has not been bettered, to the extent that the model is as popular today as ever, with a healthy and active second-hand market.

Some cars proved themselves the hard way, such as Rolls-

Royce's Silver Ghost, not only elegant but renowned as the toughest and most reliable car of its age, establishing the company's reputation around the world after beating foreign rivals on mountain roads in the famed Alpine Rally. So did the fabulous Bentleys, which swept all before them in the Le Mans 24-hour endurance races of the 1930s.

Others were simply at the leading edge of technology, setting trends that every other manufacturing nation was forced to follow. When Jaguar launched its E-type, there was simply nothing like it in the world, its looks so extravagant and its performance so electrifying.

These are the 20 cars of the past 100 years that stir the emotions. After another century, will Britain have been able to produce any that have the same durability and appeal?

Photographs by NATIONAL MOTOR MUSEUM, BEAULIEU

THESE WE HAVE LAUGHED AT CLASSICS BECAUSE THEY WERE CLUNKERS

FOR EVERY classic of the past century, there has been a complete and wonderful clunker. So many cars were well-intentioned, but ended up in the Hall of Fame for all the wrong reasons.

Right at the start, pioneers at the Scottish Argyll company put four-wheel brakes on their 1910 model, not realising that the design meant the steering locked every time the brakes were applied.

Sometimes the workmanship leaves much to be desired, such as on Jaguar's XJ saloons of the 1970s, which looked great but stalled, horns refused to work, power steering and brakes were faulty, wipers failed, fuses burnt out,

remote locking was temperamental and the fuel pump frequently packed up... apart from that, the cars were fine.

Some companies, though, combined all the qualities of bad design, bad workmanship and unreliability quite brilliantly. Step forward British Leyland (or BLMC or BLI), which made marvellous clunkers such as the Austin Allegro (and its upmarket Vanden Plas version), the Morris Marina and the Triumph TR7. In fact, the 1970s and 1980s were a rich time for duff cars, which probably explains the rise of the Japanese motor industry. For all that, their complete duffness seems now quite endearing.



Austin Allegro: What bliss. Who could possibly forget that rectangular Quartic steering wheel, which would have worked well so long as you never turned a corner?



Morris Marina: How could so many things go wrong? A pinnacle in the duff car stakes in 1973 which helped Britain's car industry along a path to near-oblivion.



Vanden Plas 1500: If a car really is that bad, then just pull out all the stops and make it worse. British Leyland produced this luxury Allegro thinking it might help.

From the Bentley Boys to Nigel Mansell, Tony Dawe looks back on the drivers who became legends

Brits who led where others followed



Champion material: from left, Jackie Stewart, three times world champion, Jim Clark, the Scottish farmer who started racing for fun, and Graham Hill, centre (Stewart's wife is in the foreground), who began a period of British dominance in 1962

Bentley, Moss, Hawthorn and Hill are names that spring to mind when one considers Britain's glorious days in the forefront of motor racing, plus the Scottish heroes Jim Clark and Jackie Stewart. But perhaps the most important name of all is Hugh Locke-King.

By creating the sensational banked race track at Brooklands, Surrey in 1907, Locke-King, a wealthy architect in his day but little remembered now, provided the ideal training ground for British cars and drivers to gain the experience necessary to challenge the continentals, who had swept the board in the first races early this century.

Graceful Sunbeams curved round the track at faster and faster speeds before astonishing the French, Italians and

Germans by clinching the first three places in a fore-runner of today's Formula One Grand Prix at Dieppe in 1912.

By the 1920s, Henry Segrave in another Sunbeam and John Cobb in a Napier Raiton were regularly winning international races before turning their minds to the world land speed record (see below).

They were household names even in the days when their exploits could be seen only on the occasional newsreel at the cinema. But the drivers who became legendary because of their glamour and fearlessness were the "Bentley Boys", a band of mainly English, rich young men who took Bentleys to Le Mans for the punishing 24-hour endurance race.

W.O. Bentley's robust and well-engineered cars were ideally suited to the toughest of all races, but it took a private entry by John Duff with co-

driver Frank Clement to prove the point by beating 39 French cars in 1924.

Bentley entered his own cars in the following two years without success, but learnt enough to attract a group of rich and ambitious young men. Dudley Benjafield and Sammy Davis won again in 1927 and Woolf Barnato, who was partly financing the racing expedition, won in 1928 with Bernard Rubin in a 4.5-litre. But the company enjoyed its most astonishing success in 1929, with four of its five entries thundering home in the first four places.

While Bentleys won the toughest races, a company called English Racing Automobiles (ERA) became the first British firm to manufacture single-seat racing cars designed for shorter races and the hill climbs popular in the 1930s. The cars sprung to

1958-1995 World Champions	
1958 Mike Hawthorn	Ferrari
1962/68 Graham Hill	BRM/Lotus
1963/65 Jim Clark	Lotus
1964 John Surtees	Ferrari
1969/71/73 Jackie Stewart	Tyrrell
1976 James Hunt	McLaren
1992 Nigel Mansell	Williams

prominence when Dick Seaman, another debonair if chunky Englishman, started driving them after making a name for himself with the American Whitney Straight team.

In his first year behind the wheel of an ERA, he won races in Italy, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia, and during a hill climb in Germany first noticed a trend which later

impressed Nigel Mansell when he started winning races for the great Italian manufacturer, Ferrari. "The crowd gave me a very sporting ovation on the way down the hill, and altogether I noticed an entirely different attitude to that adopted towards continental drivers who come over to this country," Seaman recalled.

When motor racing began

again after the Second World War, British drivers once more took a long time to seize the initiative. Alberto Ascari from Italy and Juan Fangio, an Argentinian of Italian descent, dominated the grand prix circuits from 1951 until Mike Hawthorn sneaked in to become the first British world champion in 1958.

A spirited but erratic driver, famed for his endless pranks and rows with the owners of racing teams, Hawthorn won just a single grand prix, at Reims, but earned enough points by being well-placed in many races throughout the season to pip Stirling Moss to the title.

His Ferrari team-mate, Phil Hill, played a crucial role in the outcome by waving Hawthorn through into second place during the last race of the season at Casablanca. Moss, who remains a popular

figure in the industry, became the "nearly man" of British grand prix racing, much as Damon Hill appears today, winning 16 events but never achieving the championship.

It was Hill's father, Graham, who became Britain's second champion in 1962 to begin a period of dominance in which UK drivers claimed the title for eight years out of 12. The roll of honour was shared by three very different men: Jim Clark, a mild-mannered Scottish border farmer who had started racing for fun; John Surtees, a deeply-committed competitor who had been world motorcycle champion seven times, and Jackie Stewart, the ultimate professional, shrewd, almost cautious at times, who became grand prix racing's first dollar millionaire.

Clark's death in a minor

race at Hockenheim, Germany, in 1968 after winning 25 grands prix and two championships, led to an unofficial period of national mourning. On the race track, however, his mantle was taken up immediately by Stewart, who won the 1969 championship in a French Matra for a team led by Britain's Ken Tyrrell. He won again in 1971 and 1973 at the wheel of Tyrrell's purpose-built machines and achieved 27 grand prix victories, a total surpassed only by Alain Prost of France.

Following Stewart's surprise retirement at the end of the 1973 season, Britain's dominance of the grand prix circuit faded. James Hunt, a driver with a playboy image despite hailing from Chesham in Surrey, won the title in 1976, but it was not until Mansell's victory in 1992 that a British driver again ruled supreme.

Britain has a remarkable record of producing the world's fastest men

Daredevil drivers on speed

Few activities reflect Britain's 100-year love affair with the motor car as powerfully as the succession of attempts on the world land speed record by a series of increasingly cavalier and heroic figures, writes Tony Dawe.

In machines called *Babs*, *Golden Arrow*, *Bluebird* and now *Thrust* drivers sought speed, fame, honours — and the title of "the fastest man alive" — not for themselves, but for their country.

Armed sometimes with a private income, an acquaintance with the rude mechanicals and a flexible sense of self-preservation, they faced battles to raise funds for their endeavours and frustratingly long waits for the right conditions.

Within two years of the birth of the British motor industry in 1896, Count Gaston de Chasseloup-Laubat set the first land speed record in a French-built electric Jesonard at a remarkable 39.24mph.

Belgian and French drivers battled for the title until Ernest Eldridge, an Englishman whose name is barely known today, seized it for Britain in July 1924. His record of 146mph in a 1907 Fiat, powered by a new aircraft engine, at Arpejon, France, was the last title won on a public road.

Two months later, Sir Malcolm Campbell made the first of many record-breaking runs on the Pendine Sands in Wales, reaching 146.16mph in *Bluebird*, his 350hp V12 Sunbeam. This energetic charac-



Ever faster: Sir Henry Segrave, centre, first through the 200mph barrier, with Sir Malcolm Campbell, left, who topped 300mph, and his son, Donald, who took the record past 400mph



ter increased the record to 150.87 in July 1925, then began a long duel with John Godfrey Parry Thomas and Sir Henry Segrave.

Parry Thomas drove his own Thomas-Special, christened *Babs*, while Sir Henry sat behind the wheel of a 1,000hp twin-engined Sunbeam called *Golden Arrow*. The first car to exceed 200mph. In February 1931, Sir Malcolm wrestled the title back and between then and September 1935 raised his own record four times.

It was not all glory: there were hiccups. For one of his

attempts, Sir Malcolm selected a dried up mudlake in South Africa, only to find when he arrived with *Bluebird* and his team that the surface of the lake was covered with sharp shale splinters.

A hundred labourers were brought from Cape Town to scrape off the mud, sift the top soil, mix with water and roll back to be baked hard in the heat. When all was ready, Campbell was hurt in a freak accident. As he lay recovering, it rained over the lake for the first time in five years and washed away the track.

When he finally made the

1927-1995 World Land Speed Records	
1927 Sir Henry Segrave, Sunbeam	203.793mph
1935 Sir Malcolm Campbell, Bluebird	301.129mph
1947 John Cobb, Raiton	394.200mph
1964 Donald Campbell, Bluebird	403.135mph
1983 Richard Noble, Thrust 2	633.468mph

attempt, he failed to beat the record, always set over a mile, but did establish a new record over five miles.

After breaking the 300mph barrier in 1935, he left the field to Captain George Eyston,

who won sponsorship from the British motor industry, and John Cobb, rich from the fur trade. Between them, they raised the record six times. Eyston, in his twin-engined, eight-wheeled, six-ton *Thun-*

derbolt reached 357.5mph in September 1938. Cobb's twin-engined, 47.872cc, three-ton *Raiton* reached 394.2mph in September 1947.

There it stayed for 17 years until Donald Campbell, Sir Malcolm's only son, drove another *Bluebird* at 403.1mph at Lake Eyre, Australia. From September 1924 to July 1964, all the record holders were British, except Ray Keesh of the United States in 1928.

Britain only lost the record when the rules were changed and jet engines were allowed. A period of American domination followed, until Richard

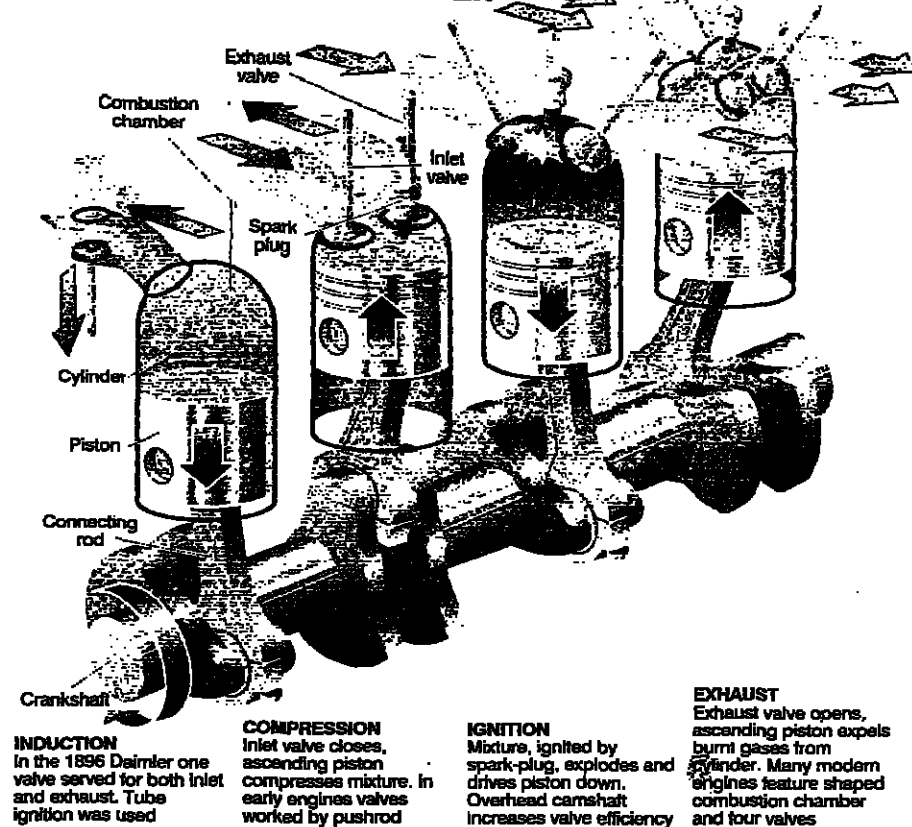
Noble founded Thrust Cars for a jet-powered attempt on the record.

A throwback to a more romantic age, Noble seized the record for Britain again in 1983 with a speed of 633.468mph. Last year he set up a £5m project to make a Briton the first man through the sound barrier in a four-wheeled car.

Flight-Lieutenant Andy Green will attempt to beat 747mph in *Thrust SSC* (supersonic car) on the flat sands of Nevada's Black Rock desert this summer and maintain a long and treasured tradition.

As manufacturers experiment with gas and electricity, Kevin Eason feels the traditional internal combustion engine will be around for a long time

100 YEARS OF PETROL POWER



INDUCTION In the 1896 Daimler one valve served for both inlet and exhaust. Tube ignition was used.

COMPRESSION Inlet valve closes, ascending piston compresses mixture. In early engines valves worked by pushrod.

IGNITION Mixture, ignited by spark-plug, explodes and drives piston down. Overhead camshaft increases valve efficiency.

EXHAUST Exhaust valve opens, descending piston expels burnt gases from cylinder. Many modern engines feature shaped combustion chamber and four valves.

Will a car ever get us there without petrol?

The start of the second century of the motor car could be marked by a switch to alternative fuels that will make their debut in road cars for the first time this year.

Volvo, BMW and General Motors all announced this week that they would be producing cars capable of using alternative fuels — Volvo and BMW opting for gas and GM putting a purpose-built electric car on sale for the first time.

Although sales of the "new fuel" models will barely make a dent in the huge numbers of petrol and diesel-driven cars, they are a turn of the wheel in the direction of a future that promises cleaner air.

When Karl Benz chugged around the streets of Mannheim 112 years ago, his two-seater tricycle was powered by a wheezing internal combustion engine. Despite the sophistication of the modern engine, Benz would have little difficulty in recognising the principles behind the modern engines for they are the same as they ever were: suck, squeeze, bang and blow.

Engines suck in air and petrol, squeeze them in a

cylinder, explode them to fire the piston with enough force to power a crankshaft, then blow waste gases out of the tailpipe.

Petrol and diesel have been the staple diet of the motor car throughout the last 100 years. Fuel injection has largely replaced the carburettor as a more efficient way of feeding the fuel in, multi-valve arrangements and overhead

camshafts have increased the efficiency of the sucking and blowing, balanced crankshafts and shaped pistons make the squeezing more effective and catalysers and silencers limit the environmental

impact of the explosion and exhaust.

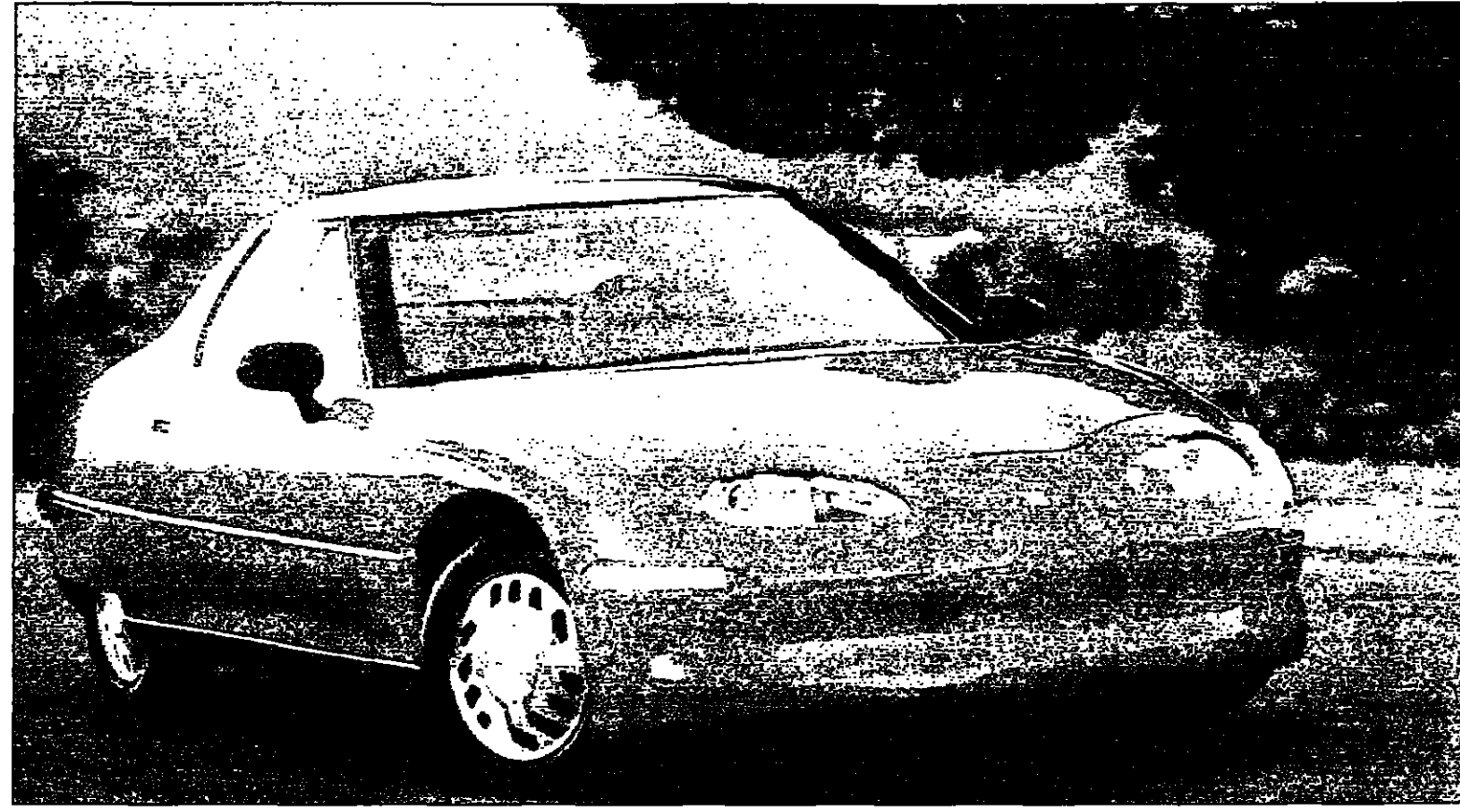
In advanced engines, the whole process is now carefully managed by microchips, but more radical changes are on the way.

Volvo will have a gas-powered version of its 850 saloons and estates in showrooms by the summer. The Bi-fuel 850s are the same as the factory-built petrol cars but have modifications to allow them to take gas from a cylinder, holding the equivalent of 4.5 gallons of gas, stored behind the rear seats.

The 2.5-litre engines can run on petrol, but switch to gas power at the push of a button on the dashboard. That gives the bonus of an extra 150 miles travelling distance from the boot-mounted tank, but the idea is to go with gas in town to cut down on toxic exhaust emissions.

Tailpipe emissions from an 850 using gas are only a tenth of the stringent limits set in Sweden: output of unburnt hydrocarbons is 80 per cent lower, carbon monoxide 77 per cent lower, nitrogen oxide 20 per cent lower and carbon dioxide 20 per cent lower.

Gas power is also two to



General Motors' EV1: complete with everything we expect in a car, but battery-driven with a range of up to 90 miles and a three-hour recharging period

three per cent more economical than petrol, while compressed natural gas sells for an equivalent 39p a litre (£1.77 a gallon). However, there is a downside: power falls by about 10 per cent, refuelling pumps, although easy to use, are hard to find at the moment — and the cars will cost an extra £3,000.

BMW is limiting the sale of its 316 and 518 gas variants to Germany unless the Government makes some concessions to gas users in this country.

In any event, the company says it is only a step on the road towards eventually using hydrogen to power cars. The technology is already there but supplying, distributing and storing liquefied hydrogen is a little tricky.

Meanwhile, GM has surged ahead with an electric car, in spite of the gloom-and-doom merchants who say it will never take off because of the limits imposed by batteries unable to offer high mileage at high power in the way that petrol can.

Astonishingly, the company first produced an electric truck in 1912. That model went out of production in 1916 and electric propulsion was not revived

until 1964, since when a series of experimental vehicles has been produced.

The two-seater EV1 will go on sale on America's West Coast and will have everything we expect from a car: dual airbags, anti-lock brakes, compact disc player and cruise control.

Designed from Impact, the concept version shown five years ago, the £22,000 teardrop-shaped car will have a range of between 70 and 90 miles with a recharging period of around three hours. A battery charger comes at an extra leasing cost. Using 26 12-volt batteries to produce a power equivalent of around 137 horsepower, the EV1 is front-wheel-drive.

But, for now, the good old internal combustion engine will keep most of us on the road. Rover launched its latest power pack — a V6 version of its successful K-series engines — at the Brussels Motor Show this week. Even though the principles are a century old, Rover would claim that the K-

series takes the process on several sophisticated steps.

The new 2.5-litre V6 will replace the 2.7-litre Honda engine the British company has been using in its upmarket 300-series saloons and hatchbacks for the past few years.

Although the K-series is slightly smaller in capacity, it is 28kgs lighter at 152kgs — and, according to Rover's figures, more powerful and economical. The KV6 yields 176Ps at 6,500rpm compared with 169Ps for the Honda 2.7 at 5,900rpm, while composite fuel figures show the KV6 returning 33.4 miles to the gallon of unleaded on manual transmission cars against the 29mpg the Honda unit offered.

This new V6 uses the same technology which has been much acclaimed in the latest Rover products, the MGF and Rover 400 and 200 series. It has the same aluminium-alloy construction, lightweight pistons, valve-train layout and similar closely spaced cylinders. The whole unit is managed by an electronic control unit with the computing power to adjust fuel input to compensate for wear and tear throughout the life of the vehicle.

Rover has introduced a new automatic transmission unit at the same time, and the control unit for this is linked with the engine control unit. The result is that at 70mph the KV6 automatic engine is turning over at 2,500rpm against nearly 3,300rpm for the previous combination.

The company's efforts are part of the crescendo of development of the petrol engine, thanks to the introduction of better engineering and more ingenious electronics. But the climax has yet to be reached at a time when consumer and environmental groups are clamouring for cars that will not pump out polluting gases into the atmospheres of our towns and cities.

That means there must be a major departure in the way that cars are powered if there is to be a second century of unrestricted freedom of personal transport.

GM first made an electric truck in 1912

Citroën's Xantia Activa enables Helen Mound to stay on the level

Masterpiece of suspension

Nothing is worse than spending a Saturday morning mopping out the back of the car just because your over-zealous driving doesn't mix well with a bootload of groceries.

Leaving the supermarket car park frustrated by squabbling families and the fact that even at 10am there's no bread on the shelves, I take it out on the car, hurling it into every available bend and junction. By the time I reach home, the boot contains a congealed mess of eggs, fruit juice and dog biscuits that was once a neatly stacked line of grocery bags.

Even if I decide to take it easy all the way home, most cars I drive present my shopping to me as if the "boot gremlins" have been playing badminton back there. Oh, for a car that doesn't roll passengers and bags from side to side: a car that doesn't lean or lurch around bends.

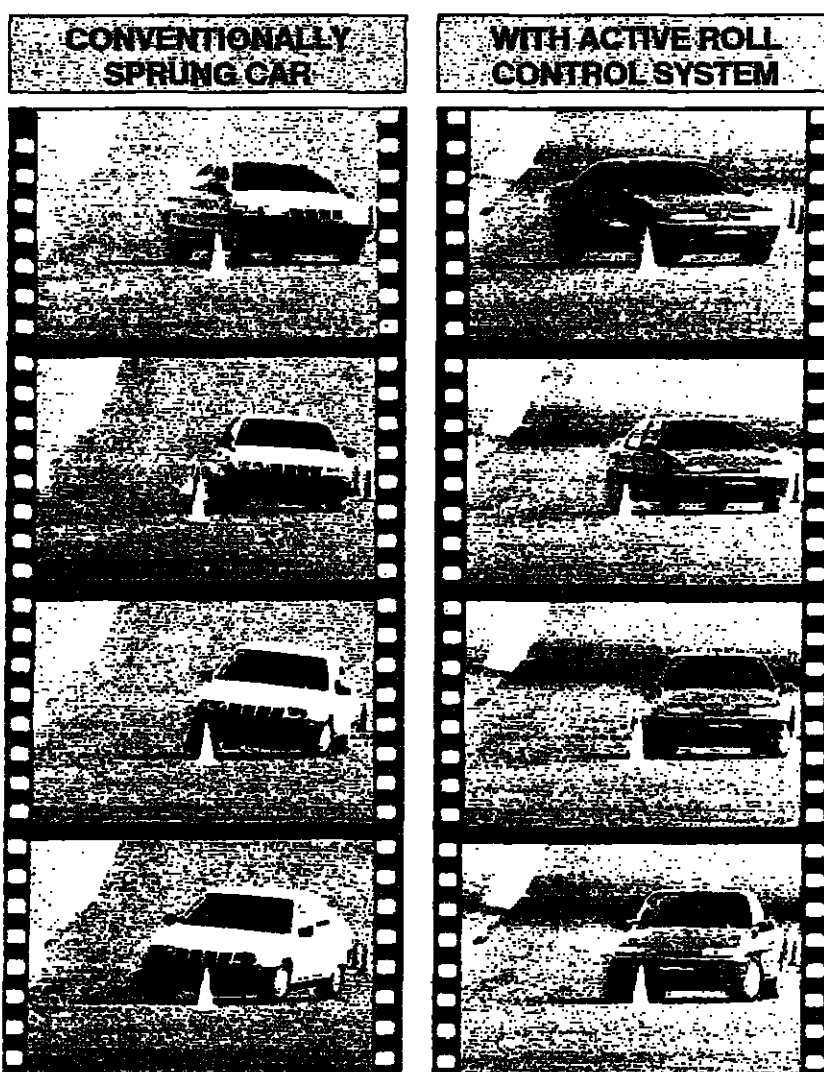
The Citroën Xantia Activa is such a car; the world's first production car with Active Roll Control suspension, which means it does not lean into corners, slump back to an even keel when it straightens up or roll from side to side through a series of bends. The Activa stays flat and balanced at every turn. And I can report that it passes the grocery test. Six carrier bags, lined up from one side of the boot to the other, did not topple over, slide around or empty themselves, despite a severe ten-mile thrashing from supermarket to home.

Other drivers are startled by the sight of the new Xantia Activa, tackling roundabouts and bends at speed. A car travelling fast with no body roll not only feels strange inside, it looks curious and unnatural from the outside. Under extreme conditions it's particularly striking: flat-out on a wide slalom, the Activa looks as level as it would if it were moving in a straight line.

Active Roll Control suspension is not new — Formula One race cars had it from its first forerunner — but it's an extraordinary sensation in an executive hatchback.

In eliminating body roll for the new flagship Xantia, Citroën was looking to produce an executive car with improved comfort, performance and, above all, safety: even if you don't understand Active Roll Control suspension, you'll probably notice the latter first. Potentially dangerous situations such as braking in a corner or steering while panic braking are far safer, because the car is evenly balanced and consistently level.

With all four wheels firmly on the ground at all times, the opportunity to correct driver error without losing control is greater. On roundabouts, any ordinary car will lean away from the centre — done at speed it will eventually break away as either the front or rear end loses grip. But a Xantia Activa can handle the tightest



circles, remaining flat and balanced, even at speed. The "Hydractive II" suspension already supplies the standard Xantia with one of the smoothest rides in its class and Activa takes it a step further.

In most cases an anti-roll bar is anchored to the car's body in the middle with a suspension arm at both ends. On the Activa, at one end of the unusually thick anti-roll bars, the suspension arm is connected by a gas-filled sphere, providing a cushioning effect when the car is travelling in a straight line.

There are two stages: enter a corner, and the sensors (for steering wheel angle, rate of rotation and road speed — already in place for the "Hydractive II" suspension) isolate the spheres via an electronic control unit, reducing their cushioning influence, resulting in a stiffer effect from the thick anti-roll bars. As the Activa leaves a bend, the spheres are reconnected and the anti-roll bars cushioned again.

The second stage is for sharper bends, triggered when the forces are so great that stiff anti-roll bars are insufficient to prevent leaning. Hydraulic rams on the anti-roll bars force the car upright and level when the body roll attempts to exceed half a degree.

While costing £1,000 more than the previous top Xantia, the Activa is the only model to benefit from the new suspension, new turbo-charged engine and a unique bodykit. Citroën claims the new suspension was inexpensive to develop, adding less than 5 per cent to the cost of the car, which may mean the next generation XM (the company's large executive saloon) will also benefit from the system.

Price: £18,480. Engine: 1998cc turbocharged. Transmission: 5-speed manual. Performance: max speed 132mph, 0-60mph 8.9 seconds. Economy: urban cycle 22.0mpg.

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BUILT WITHOUT COMPROMISE

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For further details on the new Shuttle and your nearest Honda dealer call: 0345 159 159

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BS

Being macho in the mud

DAVID HOWELLS

Guy Walters watches British hopefuls battle with nature to compete for the Camel Trophy

Many have heard of the Camel Trophy, but few can define it. Some think it an ingenious form of tobacco peddling, some a holiday, some a race, and a few merely an excuse for Mark Thatcher clones to make their mothers anxious.

The Camel Trophy is more a straightforward annual adventure, in which a convoy of Land Rovers lock their differentials across the most unappealing terrain on the planet. As if that wasn't enough, the participants have to complete "special tasks", such as building bridges and canoeing, in which their competence and team spirit is assessed.

This year the event is being held in April in Kalimantan, the Indonesian part of Borneo. The 40 participants, representing 20 countries, have 22 days to follow a 620-mile route across the island. "Route" is perhaps the wrong word, because much of it is uncharted, flooded and overgrown, and the teams will need to push themselves and their vehicles to the point of collapse if they are to complete the challenge. The three weeks will be long, punishing, hectic and very, very wet.

The first selection was held last weekend near Hay-on-Wye, a town known more for second-hand books than wrenching Discoveries and Defenders around hillsides coated in the deepest and gloopiest mud. The aim was to whittle more than 100 British entrants down to ten. It was a painful process.

The entrants arrived at Sam on Saturday, a tracksuited mob, mostly men in their mid-twenties, bristling with the early morning testosterone required to put their frames through a weekend's hell. Their first task was to run up a muddy hillside, carrying barrels, logs and wheels — a task that even most cars would balk at.

Their progress was monitored by the notepad-clutching marshals, many of whom had been on the trophy before. Their faces bore the expressions of boys who have just started their second year at school, revelling in a smug superiority based on the arrival of fresh-faced Camel neophytes.



In the rough: the marshals were looking for, if not fitness, then a high level of determination and willingness that will be needed in Kalimantan

Some hopefuls failed a few yards into the run. "He's simply not fit enough," said one marshal, giggling at a rather overweight fellow whose build screamed out one pizza too many. A few were the subjects of much praise and ticking in notepads.

"Look at that one, he's even running back down to fetch more gear," the marshals were looking for, if not fitness, then a high level of determination and willingness. That one of the women was unsuitably clad in lipstick was not necessarily detrimental.

Such qualities were also monitored in the Finesse Driving stage, in which Honda Pilots had to be guided around a course of cones as smoothly and quickly as possible. Some, desperate to impress, found themselves knocking down a motorway's worth of cones, and notching up some crosses.

The next part of the Finesse Driving was what many had come for — off-roading in Discoveries. This was deep

end stuff: the course was steep, curvaceous and treacherously muddy. It was like driving through a giant urtic. Most entrants had had little experience, but Steve Vaughan, one of the Land Rover instructors, found that preferable. "We like it if someone doesn't know everything," he said. "Then we can mould them to how we like them. Sometimes you get farmers' sons who have tons of experience but some terrible habits."

Natural leaders were coming to the fore

Sitting with some of the entrants was a frightening experience, especially when slithering down one-in-four inclines, when only the ground is visible through the windscreen. Most fared capably, although the Discoveries suffered many a dent, nick, bump and scrape. This was not a good place to be a tree.

At the day's end, 40 were lucky enough to be asked to remain for Sunday. However, their fortune was paltry. They had to sleep outdoors, and throughout the night were summoned to go on runs.

perform exercises, and — the most painful of all — dragging a "defunct" Land Rover along the course. What the entrants didn't know was that the marshal resolutely kept his foot on the brakes to make life considerably more muscle-ripping. The language was fouler than the mud.

Sunday saw an increase in the complexity of challenges. The most arresting was the construction of a bridge out of trees, an essential skill for the ten river crossings that the Kalimantan journey involves. By this stage, natural leaders were coming to the fore, although one rather didactic and loud-mouthed entrant was beginning to cause strain among his muddled and sodden peers. One of the marshals was heard saying, "If he comes along, it will be over my dead body."

The final ten were chosen with difficulty, and despite the marshals' denials that they were chosen for their looks, all displayed the requisite "Camel Man" appeal that works so well in adverts for indestructible watches. All they needed was a bath.



Uphill work: the language was often fouler than the mud

DR DASHBOARD

Good reasons to give thanks

Q I'm baffled by this "Lady Godiva" business at Coventry cathedral. Was the protest justified?

A We doctors are used to seeing people take their clothes off, of course, but it's difficult to see the logic of that particular protest. Where better to celebrate the motor industry than Coventry.

Q Why does the industry deserve a blessing?

A I just can't resist that dreadful pun used by one of the Coventry clergy about the "Car vest festival". Since 1896, when the first Daimler was made there, 127 different kinds of car have been manufactured in the city, providing employment for thousands. The car is literally the fruit of their labour.

Q But most of those makes went out of business long ago. Is making cars still important?

A There are still major manufacturers based there. The majority of Peugeot's 5,400 workers are in Coventry, and Jaguar employs 6,000. At the last census in 1991, the city had a population of 295,000 and 18,456 of them were directly employed in the motor industry. In 1956 when the population was 267,000 the industry employed 42,080.

Q Doesn't that last figure just show the decline of Britain's motor industry?

A No one would deny that it has had its problems, but it remains one of the biggest manufacturing businesses in the country, 800,000 jobs depend upon it. Its export record is excellent: in 1996 we produced 1,019 million cars and exported just 188,000 of them, last year we made 1.53 million and exported 740,000, or 48 per cent.

Q What does it mean in terms of money?

A In 1994, according to Customs and Excise figures, we exported vehicles worth a record £12.8bn. Last year Jaguar exports alone amounted to more than £1 billion, Land Rover sent more than 80 per cent of its production abroad.

Q But what about deaths on the road and all that pollution?

A The number of people killed on Britain's roads in 1994 was 3,650, the lowest since records began in the 1920s. The carmakers are spending huge sums on safety and anti-pollution measures.

Q So what would the doctor say is the chief benefit of the car?

A Personal mobility. One of my patients told me this week that he was going to join the Newbury by-pass protesters. "How will you get there?" I asked. "I'll go in the Jag, of course," he replied.

A COVENTRY DIARY

DENIS Thatcher had a good time, even if the Bishop of Coventry was distinctly shaken by his naked encounter with the motor industry, writes Kevin Eason. Centenary celebrations culminated in a dinner for 1,600 executives, celebrities and guests at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham.

At table 107 was Sir Denis, a guest of the Quinton Hazell Group, happily enjoying a pageant of 100 years of motoring presented by John Humphrys of Radio 4's *Today*. Top of the bill was singer Michael Ball, who presumably came cheap as he is the son of Tony Ball of Tony Ball Associates, which organised the shindig.

Everyone who was a motorist someone was there, from Sir Michael Edwards, saviour of the Rover Group, to Zhao Dong, a member of a

Chinese trade delegation studying the British motor industry. The delegation must have loved the presentation, which included the band of the Coldstream Guards, the pipes and drums of the Scots

in a dinner for 1,600 executives, celebrities and guests at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham. Through it all, the Bishop, the Rt Rev Simon Barrington-Ward, remained stiff upper-lipped after a harassing day at the cathedral which went wrong the moment a nude lady decided to decorate the altar.

Executives at Car 96 were anxious to discover something about the Bishop's interest in cars, including what he drove, only to meet a frosty response. His aide told us that he drives a car made in Coventry — which leaves a choice between a Peugeot 306 (price range £9,500-£14,000) or a Jaguar (£29,000-£60,000).



In church, an 1897 Daimler-Benz



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